





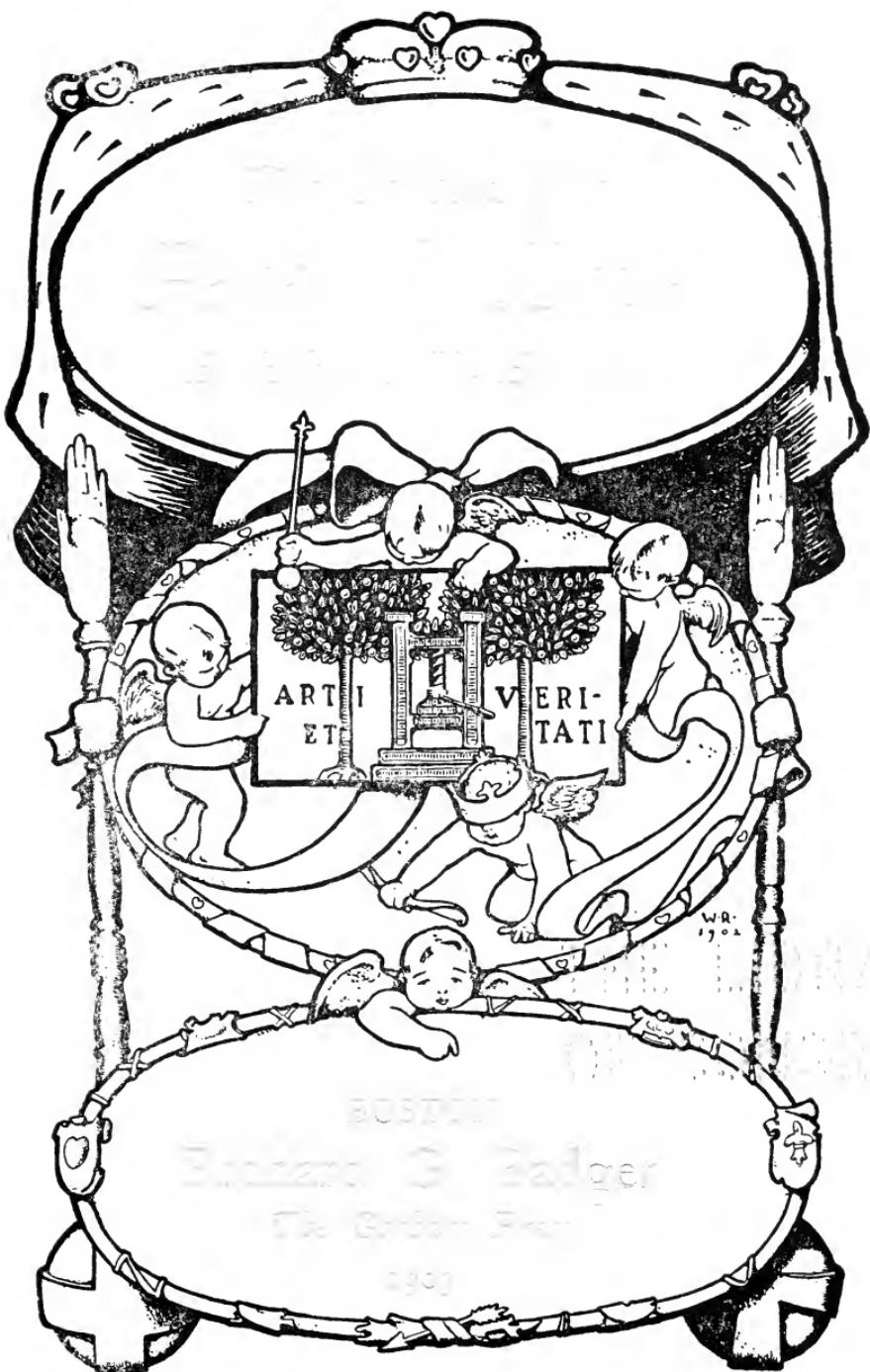
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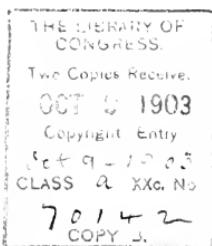
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1903

W.R.
1903

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1. K. 725, 111930

To
Flora
Loyal Friend,
Devoted Sweetheart and
Ideal Wife—
this Book is Lovingly
Dedicated

*Much Memory—more Imitation;—
Some Accidents of Inspiration;—
Some Essays in that finer Fashion
Where Fancy takes the place of Passion;—
And some (of course) more roughly wrought
To catch the Advocates of Thought.*

—Austin Dobson.

*Oh, for the Poet-Voice that swells
 To lofty truths, or noble curses—
I only wear the cap and bells,
 And yet some Tears are in my verses.
I softly trill my sparrow reed,
 Pleased if but One should like the twitter;
Humbly I lay it down to heed
 A music or a minstrel fitter.*

—Frederick Locker.

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*“More Poets yet!”—I hear him say,
Arming his heavy hand to slay;—
“Despite my skill and ‘swashing blow,’
They seem to sprout where’er I go;—
I killed a host but yesterday!”*

*Slash on, O Hercules! You may.
Your task’s, at best, a Hydra-fray;
And though YOU cut, not less will grow
More Poets yet!*

*Too arrogant! For who shall stay
The first blind motions of the May?
Who shall out-blot the morning glow?—
Or stem the full heart’s overflow?
Who? There will rise, till Time decay,
More Poets yet!*

—Austin Dobson.

CELEBRATING MINE OWN





FLORA'S PLAYING

She played. Apart we sat in rapt delight,
All chatter hushed and gossip put to flight.
What was the piece? I really forget!
A fugue perhaps, a nocturne, canzonet—
In music-lore I am no learned wight!

But this I know, withal my learning's slight,
Deft was her execution and aright;
And later, in a rollicking duet
She played a part.

All done, she turned about, and then despite
The distance of my seat — distracting plight—
I caught a flash of lace, a gleam of jet —
A long-drawn, sweet, deep sigh—our eyes had met!
And in all Life's best things from that dear night,
She played a part!

A FAIR EXAMPLE

Add to the thousand little lights
That play in Flora's hair,
The thousand thousand in her eyes
That burn so constant there:

To these the marble curves of brow
And neck, the warmer lines
Of ears transparent, delicate,—
Shells set in sunny shrines.

To these the milk-white seeds that gleam
In her pomegranate mouth
That speaks with such a winning lisp
The language of the South.

Set down the dimples, if you can
Count such elusive things,
That twinkle in her cheeks, as in
Her sky, the lamps Night brings.

Then choose a figure to express
The amplitude of hers,
(A graceful one of speech will serve
So it but truth avers.)

And if in summing you are skilled
A deal or not at all,
The *footing* of these myriad charms
You'll find is very small

ANACREONTICS

Dele from the pledge my name,
Writhing 'neath a drift of blame,
Where but now I wrote it fair.
When my hand inscribed it there
My slow eyes had not beheld
Flora's charms. The mist dispelled,
Now, though all light fades from mine,
From her eyes I'll drink the wine!

Dele from your scroll my name.
Blot it out, nor cry me shame.
Prate not of sobriety—
Prithee, what's your cant to me?
I'll be sworn that you must needs
Fashion more alluring creeds
Ere less oft her lover sips
The red wine of Flora's lips!

Drop my name, and in its place
Put some wight's whom Flora's face
Has not turned a Bacchanal.

I see but equivocal
Virtue in your abstinence
When such eyes and lips dispense,
Cheering as the blue above,
The life-giving wine of love.

FALILA

(SONG)

Once I worshipped orbs of blue,
 Falila,

'Twas long, long ere I knew you,
 I would say,

For since in your deep, dark eyes
Cupid took me by surprise,
Not a charm in others lies
 Falila.

Theirs is dear and constant light
 Falila,

That transcends the stars of night
 As the day,

And the blue eyes cease to be
Limpid lakes of witchery
When they softly beam on me,
 Falila.

*Refrain : Falila, Falila, dear Falila,
 Coy, unassuming, unvain :
Love does not blind us as sage felows say
 But rather makes Beauty more plain.*

Once I held the golden hair,
 Falila,

Beautiful beyond compare,
 But to-day
In your wealth of tresses brown
I behold a fairer crown
Fitter far for world renown
 Falila.
Yet if Fate had giv'n in place
 Falila,
Of dark eyes and gypsy grace,
 Sweet as they,
Golden hair and eyes of blue,
To first tenets I'd been true
Seeing so much good in you,
 Falila.

*Refrain: Falila, Falila, dear Falila,
 Coy, unassuming, unvain.
Love does not blind us as sage fellows say
 But rather makes Beauty more plain.*

TO MY AFFIANCED

Should you fail me, O dear heart!
 What were then Life's pleasance to me?
Smile, with hope my pulses start;
 Frown, my sweet, and you undo me.
Let all good of Earth be mine,
 What would gold and fame avail me?
Nectar would be dregs of wine,
 Should you fail me!

Should you fail me, O dear heart!
 Cursed would be the years I knew you:
Cursed the days from you apart,
 When in dreams I came to woo you.

I would sorrow and repine
Though men as their chieft might hail me:
Ah! the sun would cease to shine
Should you fail me!

Should you fail me? No, dear heart!
God and fate together drew us.
We'll be true through smile and smart
While the life-blood courses through us.
Though our day to dark decline,
Doubts of *you* shall ne'er assail me:
Love to Lust will sell its shrine
Ere you fail me!

TO AN OLD YEAR AND A NEW

Good-bye old year that wert so kind,
You leave me richer far to-night
In all the goods the world holds dear
Than when you gladdened first my sight.
Indulgently you granted, too,
A tittle of the fame I sought;
But, greater than repute or pelf,
Another treasure still you brought,
And when I speak of you I'll say:
“*The year that gave me Falila.*”

And you, wee stranger, at the gate
Whom presently we must let in,
How shall one have his welcome run
Your favor and your smiles to win?
A greeting! May it be your will
To keep us as you find us, blest;
But if to me, so happy now,
Some measure of distress seems best,
Take gold and name, but O I pray
Leave me my loving Falila!

CONSISTENCY

My wife defines athletics
 “Brute force upon parade,”
And downs their staunchest champions with
 A lingual fusillade.

She's wrong, but quite consistent,
 For, loyal to her views,
She even shuns the study when
 I'm wrestling with my muse.

WHEN STELLA CAME

(SONG)

When Stella came I thought my heart was full to overflowing
 Of Her, but little more than child herself, who gave me
 Stella,
 But Oh! the heart's capacity is past all mortal knowing,
For mine holds Stella now and, in the old place, Stella's
 mother!

*Refrain: There's always a place for one more in the
heart,
The store-house of love is as wide as the sea,
And all it demands of its tenants is part
 Of theirs that shall always in readiness be.*

And though my heart to-day appears to be a well-filled
dwelling,
Whose owner looks nor right nor left to find him other
tenants,

It has, perhaps, a chamber wide and ample—there's no
telling! —
For yet another stranger, should one come, if like my
Stella.

*Refrain: There's always a place for one more in the
heart,
The store-house of love is as wide as the sea,
And all it demands of its tenants is part
Of theirs that shall always in readiness be.*

WHAT STELLA SEES

“Papa, I see a baby in your eyes!”
Though all day long the sun his light
Sheds on us at a lavish rate,
The noon of my content’s at night
Just when the short hand’s nearing eight.
For that’s the hour my witch of four
Claims for her very, very own!
The paper drops! — she’s at the door! —
Then *presto!* she is on her throne
And whispering in that voice so dear,
Aye with the same shy, sweet surprise,
Her tiny mouth close to my ear:
“I see a baby in your eyes!”

A baby in my eyes! Ah! yes,
And that is *all* that Stella sees:
She vaguely knows when they caress,
And by their gloom when things displease.
But naught appears upon the glass
Which mirrors her bright face, to tell
What complex feelings crowd each pass
Behind its smiling sentinel.

Anxiety for future years,
What's that to Stella? She descries
No token of my hopes and fears,
But just "*a baby in my eyes!*"

However kind, Old Time at last
Will dispossess the tenant wee:
Girl, woman, as the years go past
Succeeding to the tenancy.
Love light in other eyes will shine
And glad my darling's earthly way,
Please Heaven, when in sadder mine
The shadows of my dotage play.
But not till they forever close,
While Death's dark angel waits apart,
Or chance or changes shall depose
The baby reigning in my heart!

"I DIDN'T MEAN TO"

(SONG)

I

Someone was naughty to-day,
Disobeyed, pouted and cried;
Wanted to have her own way
Though it were better denied.
But when time come for "Good-night,"
"*If I have grieved you,*" she said,
Hiding her eyes from the light,
Pulling me down by the bed,—

Refrain: "I didn't mean to, honest and true!
I didn't mean to, true as I live!"
What could I say to her, what could I do?
Nothing but hug her, kiss and forgive!

II

Someone's mamma pains me, too,
Sometimes when things don't go right,
And she is certain to sue,
When it comes time for "Good-night,"
For my forgiveness and say,
Turning her wet eyes from me,
"If I have hurt you to-day"—
Using the baby's own plea:

*Refrain: "I didn't mean to, honest and true!
I didn't mean to, true as I live."*
What can I say to her, what can I do?
Nothing but hug her, kiss and forgive.

A SMALL AND EARLY

On Christmas I dined at an hour
Which well might be classed as unseemly,
But though you shut me in a tow'r
I'll still say I liked it extremely.
The napery, whilst hardly new,
In places was strikingly snowy;
The china, in Delftest of blue,
Attractive without being showy.
Indeed, I was pleased with my lot,
And though she said "bestes'" and "mostes'",
And "Isn't I?" for "Am I not?"
I had an unparagoned hostess.

The table, it's true, was quite small—
So tiny, in fact, that I fear it
Would never have answered at all
Had I not floored myself to be near it.
The service was rather unique,
But marked by dispatch (if not neatness!)

The tea was transparent and weak,
And ev'ry course cloyed with its sweetness.
My bones and my back ached again,
Yet, as I'm a penitent sinner,
I truly regretted it, when
The breakfast-bell ended our dinner.

I sat at the end of the day
Beside a board rich of complexion;
Its master a man who can play
The part of the host to perfection:
A man whom I envied lang syne
His wealth and his high social standing,
But, somehow, a feeling more fine
Than envy my breast's now commanding.
For Heaven's denied him one gem
That I proudly wear — the wee daughter
Who dined me at 7 A. M.
On the dishes St. Nicholas brought her.

THE MEASURE OF STELLA'S LOVE

She rendered unto him all day
The good Saint's due—praise, gratitude,
And with such warmth I'm free to say
It put me in a jealous mood.
So when she came to say '*Good-night*'
And whispered in my willing ear,
On tip-toe in her gown of white,
Softly, "*I love you, papa dear!*" —
"You love me, but how *much?*" I said,
And after just the slightest pause
She answered, pulling down my head:
"*I love you more than Santy Claus!*"

The day had been a happy one
As ev'ry Christmas ought to be;
There was no dearth of cheer nor fun
And ev'ry bell pealed merrily.
Those near and dear had said 'Good-will'
In more or less substantial ways,
And nothing in the guise of ill
Had called for pity or dispraise.
But Stella's bed-time hour by far
The happiest was to me, because
'Twas then she found, my own bright star!
She '*loved me more than Santa Claus!*'

A TYPICAL SUNDAY

Another Sunday's over, and what of all the plans
Through the long week since Monday for its obser-
vance laid?
(And when I write "observance" I ask not any man's
Belief that my devotion is *all* to churchdom paid!)
To read and write a little, and in the afternoon
To doze a time serenely, the gyves of business slipped,
To me means rest the sweetest. The hours fly oversoon,
And with a mellow meerschaum Care shortly is out-
stripped.
'Twas in this lazy fashion I planned to spend to-day,
But I've not read nor written nor caught the shortest nap,
And smoke? Of course I didn't! How could I do
aught, pray,
With Flora at her music and Stella in my lap?

The wife laughed bits of gossip between her bass hits at
A florid old concerto,—some alien knave's, in short!
The daughter plead for stories, impressing on me that
They must be of, to please her, a Zenda Jr. sort.

I cultivated patience when dinner, so to speak,
(For some good Irish reason) flashed in the pan and had
To be begun all over—the bouillon *then* was weak,
 The cutlets very stringy, the coffee very bad.
Yet here at ten I find me with marvellous content
 To my cheroot confiding that I'm a lucky chap,
And after all the day has been most profitably spent
 With Flora at her music and Stella in my lap.

A LENTEN BALLAD

(With apologies to Mr. Dobson.)

The ladies of St. James's
 Are charitably bent,
And practise self-denial
 For forty days in Lent:
But Falila, my Falila!
 Who has *no* creed, I fear,
Nor sitting at St. James's,
 Is kind throughout the year.

The ladies of St James's
 To sewing-circles go,
And pick the rector's daughters
 To pieces as they sew:
But Falila, my Falila!
 Finds more important cares—
She stays at home to set a patch
 And mind her own affairs.

The ladies of St. James's
 In softly-cushioned pews
Devoutly kneel to bless them,
 Their minds on gloves and shoes.

But Falila, my Falila!
Of rites who little knows,
Forgets herself and blesses *all*,
Nor thinks of furbelow.

The ladies of St. James's
Are trained of throat and tongue,
Yet somehow their responses
Are very badly sung:
But Falila, my Falila!
In notes and staves untaught,
Can trill the quaintest catches
With real music fraught.

The ladies of St. James's
Deserve your stern rebukes,
They sneer at every stitch on
The ladies of St. Luke's:
But Falila, my Falila!
As a true woman should,
Looks underneath the surface
To find the pure and good.

The ladies of St. James's,
They put their sackcloth on
For each brief Lenten Season,
And sin again anon.
But Falila, my Falila!
Has nothing to repent,
She makes each day a Shrovetide
And never comes to Lent.

My Falila! My Falila!
They may be fair of face,
But all that make St. James's
Have fallen far from grace.

They take their lip-devotion
Where all the world may see,
But Falila—my Falila—
Does right for only me!

IN DIVERS MOODS



CONSOLATION

When one has striven year on year
With faithful zeal to gain a goal,
Devoting heart and mind and soul
To its attainment; and the cheer
Of reaching it at last seems near,
Only upon succeeding days
To have it fade from hopeful gaze,
Leaving a sense of failure clear—
What can be consolation here?

This: Consolation mightiest —
The knowledge we have done our best!

IMPRESSIONS

En Ville

Who has been born and bred in some old town,
Where patriarchal elms or willows meet
In leafy arches over lane and street,
Bestowing shadow rugs of tender brown
Upon the road beneath, once he has pressed
The choking dust of a metropolis,
Will aye recall the day as spent amiss,
A time of scorching fever and unrest.

A la Campagne

Who has been fostered in a city's glare,
And trodden all his youth its blist'ring ways
That know no shade save that the midnight lays—
Let him no more than from his railway-chair
Catch one short glimpse of Nature's lavishment
Upon a favored vale of groves and green,
And he forever will unite the scene
With thoughts of perfect peace and sweet content.

HEART OF THE WOODS

Heart of the woods, throbbing so tristfully,
 Whether embraced of the amorous noon,
 Or the clear gaze of the passionless moon
Searches your depths, whitely and wistfully:
Whether the May trills to you cheerfully
 Madrigal measures of blossoms and wings;
 Or a chill, airy-limbed autumn night brings
Voices to chant, dolefully, tearfully,—

Wherefore your grief? Sobs for the olden time
 Ere ruthless man profaned your sweet shade;
 When the stag came to your innermost glade;
This is your grief: Grief for that golden time.
Heart of the woods, then mine is kin to you;
 That e'er is turning to days that are fled:
 Turning to loves that are tomb'd with the dead.
Heart of the woods, let me come in to you.

WHEN MIDDLE-AGE HAS OLDER GROWN

That hoyden, Youth, flings wide the door
 And wantonly the garden's store
 Quick he despoils, and leaves to die,
His brief desires that satisfy,
Scarce redder than his cheeks, his lips,
The roses that he ruthless clips.

Staid Middle-Age in high-backed chair,
Ensconced in the low window there,
Descries this sack of summer's gifts,
And eyes, voice, finger, he uplifts
In stern reproof of Youth's mad way
That darkens all his little day.

When Middle-Age has older grown
Not only will he then condone
Your maddest pranks, and fondly be
The very soul of lenity;
But, harking back long years, you elf,
Will join you in them all, himself.

LE CALME

I.

After long time of dread shrieking of winds and of merciless tempest,
When the sea thunders its blackness up, up, till a sullen cloud plunges
Bright, quiv'ring shafts in its bosom—then, after the night has gone over,
Comes sweet-mouthed morn, gentle-mienèd, all roseate, dreamy and peaceful;
Spotless of sky, save a lark's silhouette that to sunward is winging;
Silent of voice, save the song of the lark in faint snatches, and murmur,
Musical murmur of ripples that hasten them shoreward in gladness;
How near is God when the storm's rage is spent and the sea has grown tranquil!

II.

How like is life to the tempest, how like to the blind,
 blighting tempest,
While its young barque tosses over the black sea of treach-
 erous passion,
Seaming the innocent face with the horrible scars of in-
 dulgence,
Dulling the eye, the mouth's kindliest lines turning cyni-
 cal, bitter.
How we chafe, serfs of unrest, 'neath the galsome strong
 fetters that bind us,
Till through the clouds shines the light of bright eyes that
 entreat and encourage.
Ah! the dear feeling of peace, with the old paths forever
 forsaken,
Follows bestowal of God's choicest blessing — a pure love
 requited.

AT THE END

We were of those misled, who love too well;
 Who wreck Youth's shallop in the brine of tears,
And for a day's delicious briefness sell
 The uniform content of many years.
But though we erred together, equally,
 The unappealable ukase of men
That set the scarlet brand of sin on me
 Left him unscathed, life to begin again.
Despair had maddened him, and anguish torn,
If he had borne the blame that I have borne.

From room to room the shade of Hester's Pearl
 Through those last months walked with me, old and
 wise;
The signet of my shame, too, was a girl

Who looked reproaches with her father's eyes
A bitter twelvemonth and unchristened died.

I laughed once more—the first time after—then,
The precious boon of weeping me denied,

While in black scorn their fingers raised again.
Ah! what a trifling thing had been earth's scorn
If he had shared the blame that I have borne.

His lawful wife is fair as I am swart;

Her hair is sunny and her eyes are blue;
And they are happy, if the world's report

That reaches my asylum walls is true.
Pure soul, if she has taught him to forget
The sad imprudence that has been my ban,

To her I owe of gratitude a debt,

For Oh! I love him as she never can.
If for a minute's space Peace he has known,
'Tis best that I have borne the blame alone.

TO A LITTLE APOSTATE: *ÆTAT SEVEN*

Less than two months ago, one Nicholas

Your patron saint was, and no pow'r could dim
The faith impregnable you placed in him,
Nor banter its undoing bring to pass.

And now, you renegade, 'tis Valentine

To whom you pay your worshipment devout,
And lie awake o' nights to point me out
As one deserving of a costly shrine.

But why should I complain, all said and done,

Against your innocent apostasy?

What is your little fickleness to me
Since I'm Sts. Nick and Valentine in one?

THE NEW CIRCE

No islet-kingdom has this fair-haired one,
Of drugs no knowledge, philtres brews not she,
Yet many self-sure men has she undone
By her own ways of pleasant sorcery.
She whirls in no mad dances dervishly,
Nor with incantatory crooning charms
Her hapless slaves, who yet would not be free
While with a conq'ring smile she soothes, disarms,
Born of some slight neglect, their fears, doubts and alarms.

She has no wand nor needs one. Her demesne
Is ev'ry drawing room. A slender chair
Becarved and gilt, her throne that any queen
Might wish to sit upon. About her there
They crowd, the subjects of this guileless fair,
Fain for the services she may command;
Content forever the sweet bonds to wear—
That even Egypt's moly cannot rend—
If she, though loving not, to love them will pretend.

BITTER MEMORIES

The reminiscent rhymester sings
Full oft of childhood days,
Which ever flit on brilliant wings
By most nectarious ways.
Sweets *pur et simple* fill his rhyme,
No bitter may steal in,
And it is very clear that I'm
Not of the singer's kin.
For when I go down Memory's street
At every turn I see
Quinine—that must be taken 'neat'—
And boneset tea.

And, though it sounds a paradox,
More bitter things than these
I find in the Pandoran box
Of childhood memories.
Not aloes—which I learned to *like*
What time I bit my nails,
Nor rhubarb—I was *such* a tike
For mixing of my ails!
But these, these are the bitterest—
Molasses thick and black
With sulphur subtly coalesced,
And ipecac!

BETTY TO HERSELF

(*On Christmas Morning*)

How kind they have been to their Betty !
What girl is so favored as I ?
The sum of my virtues is petty,
But love sees the figures mile-high.
The pleasing array's almost endless,
They've humored my every whim,
Yet I feel quite forsaken and friendless—
There's nothing from *him* !

His income I know is a small one
With which a great deal must be done :
Forsooth, it's enough to appal one,
His burden from sun unto sun.
But surely I've kept within reason
Expecting, by good-will inspired,
A greeting becoming the season—
It's all I desired !

These verses I longed for so deeply
Are puerile things after all;
And none must discover how cheaply
The strains of this rhapsody brawl!—
But whose card is this with the roses?
It's *his*! — and the line that I read
Such a beautiful secret discloses
My cup's full, indeed!

ON NEW YEAR'S EVE

(*A Reverie*)

There sinks the last December sun,
(The prospect from this window's cheerful!)
And new days come, rose-hued or dun,
As fate ordains, another yearful.
Who'd spare the old year's hoary locks?
Not Davy, by his namesake's lockers!
Tomorrow *he* steps out of frocks
And into knickerbockers.

And now the moon above us fares:
(The prospect from this window's charming!)
Old moon, old year! My own grey hairs
Are coming at a rate alarming.
But who would have the minutes stay?
Not I! I like the present phasis!
To-morrow puts my starveling pay
Upon a higher basis.

Eleven strikes! I'm half asleep!
(My stars, this window-seat is chilly!)

The vigil I set out to keep
Seems after all a trifle silly.
Who bids Time "*Halt!*" ? It's Imogene's
Sad voice that mourns the *far niente*
Of fleeting, tranquil, care-free teens—
Tomorrow she'll be twenty !

OLD VALENTINES

To-day with a yearning for long ago days
And all the bright things that were one with my youth,
I threaded the lumber-room's dustiest maze
And sung as I searched of life's raptures and ruth.
I brought out old books and turned many a leaf
Which still has the power my interest to win,
And presently came on a yellowy sheaf
Of valentines hid since the sixties were in.

The red rose is white and the violet blue
Is faded and pale as a flower of snow;
Forget-me-nots reft of their delicate hue
Have ceased for true lovers and happy to blow.
The once dainty lace shows the ravage of Time,
The tinsel is tarnished and glistens no more,
But clear as a bird's is the lilt of the rhyme
And tender and sweet as I found it of yore.

With reverent fingers I lifted each one,
Recalling the sender while quiet tears fell;
I said o'er the verses by heart, missing none,
And marvelled that mem'ry should serve me so well.
The years have set some things most sadly awry!
This dumpy gilt Cupid and scintillant dove
Are not more old-fashioned and graceless than I,
And all things are changed but the language of love.

A WINTER SONG

A full moon and a silver floor
Swept by a bracing gale
Await us out-of-doors, my dear,
 So leave your paltry tale.
So leave your love-sick tale, my dear,
 With all its base intrigue
And come where, gaged by Joy, each rod's
 A mile, each mile a league!

The turn-pike leading riverward
 Sings with the crunch of snow!
There's new life in the crispy air!
 Come! Get your skates and go.
Your sharpest and most bright, my dear,
 And be prepared to pay
A small toll at the crumbling gate
 Upon our pleasant way.

We'll seek the willows that dipped in
 Our skiff on August nights,
And mark how hazily the skies
 Reflect the city's lights.
Reflect! The city's lights, my dear,
 Have lost their chiefest beam
When you, in brisk or balmy hours,
 Are with me on the stream.

Your eyes will dance at one mile-stone,
 At two your cheeks will glow;
At three I'll say it's *best* to turn,
 And yet you will not! *No!*
And yet you will not know, my dear,
 The meaning of fatigue,
For love and sweet companionship
 Make inches of a league!

A BALLAD OF OLD SKATES

I see a host of little men
 Troop by from school at half-past three,
And presently troop back again,
 Skates on their arms, in highest glee.
The gleaming blades throw back to me
 A shaft of sunlight and are gone,
And then, as in a dream, I see
 The old-time skates that buckled on!

They *all* come back—the good old ways!—
 The legend that to boy and man
The cars showed on propitious days—
 “Good skating on Branch Brook” it ran.
From that hour Boreas began
 His reign, till disenthroned anon,
There were no dearer treasures than
 The old-time skates that buckled on!

Good skating? Well! Four months of it!
 (The winter months *then* got their dues!)
And many a night saw bon-fires lit
 Upon the ice—and barbecues!
At six, with heel-plates in my shoes,
 My best boast was that I could don,
With all their clumsy straps and screws,
 The old-time skates that buckled on!

Young man, the modern skate's a ‘champ’
 And ‘just perfection’, you declare;
But I'll be bound the clever clamp
 Does not increase the sport a hair.
I'm in the forties now, my share
 Embonpoint; but by Helicon!
If I could skate I still would wear
 The old-time skates that buckled on!

FOR THE EYE OF HORTENSE

When I was still in velveteen,
 Love's meaning all unknown to me,
A lady on a lacquered screen
 Smiled from her bow'r seductively.
And underneath the study lamp
 A wee bronze siren slyly made
(*A vivandiere* from Cupid's camp)
 To win me with a serenade.
But gazing from my hassock low
 I craved, far out of reach and risk,
And tricked to thrill Monsieur Watteau,
 A dainty shepherdess in bisque.

The Oriental's outspread fan
 And bright *kimono*, cherry-hued,
Changed to a garden of Japan
 The parlor's stuffy solitude.
And many an hour's distress allayed
 The cithern of that brazen minx,
(According to my mood she played
 The Maiden's Prayer or *Captain Jinks!*)
But of my glance oblivious quite,
 Unbending as an obelisk,
Stood far above me chill and white
 The tender shepherdess in bisque.

The people of my nursery days
Have come again in later years:
One lights with smiles uncheery ways,
One still with lightsome music cheers.
And she to whom my heart goes out
With all the fire of twenty-two
Is far above me, ill with doubt,
Like that cold Phebe I once knew.
Indeed, for all that falls to me
Of favors from this maiden brisk,
She might as well, I vow it, be
The soulless shepherdess in bisque.

OF GRETCHEN, WHO COMES WITH THE ALE

When quip and jest no blithe response
Wake in the hyped heart,
And in life's arbor for the nonce
No grapes are else than tart,
I summon for my better state
A sylph in wooden shoes,
Before whose smile fly swift and straight
Most mazarine of blues!
A gay good genius from the Rhine,
My Lady of the cheerful stein.

The nectar on Olympus quaffed
Would not, (I'm giving odds!)
Once o'er 'old musty' they had laughed,
Have satisfied the gods.
And none who in our days his whet
Takes from a crystal brim

Brought by a much-befrilled *grisette*
Knows what joy's lost to him.
She comes with better drink than wine,
My Lady of the cheerful stein.

Like lovely Aphrodite, sprung
From Neptune's bitter spume,
Fair Gretchen stands froth-crowned, a young,
Bright goddess dooming gloom.
But underneath her simpler zone
No guile plans escapades,
The pride of conquest quite unknown
Beneath her flaxen braids.
She boasts more charms than Proserpine,
My Lady of the cheerful stein.

And if in lonesome hours to me
When nights are cold and long,
To wish she were an entity
The stimulus is strong,
I just reflect: Had she a heart
My measure might be woe!
The creature of a potter's art
If she remains, I'll know
She really is mine, all mine—
My Lady of the cheerful stein.

LITTLE FLINGS AT LITTLE
FOLLIES



HIS WATERLOO.

Man is heir to divers trials,
Tribulations and denials
Of the things which most devoutly
He desires. But still he stoutly
Bears up under disappointment,
Finding efficacious ointment
In sweet Hope, that ne'er forsakes him,
For his wounds. Yet *one* thing takes him
With despairing. He resigns his
Claim to meekness and consigns his
Shoestring to Dan Pluto's lakes,
When it breaks!

THE DEDUCTION OF A MISOGYNIST

I swear by Master Lempriere,
So grieve the more that he insists,
With much misled mythologists,
The Sphinx was partly woman. Share
This view who will, *I* must conclude
It's a mistaken one, since she
(I grant the feminality)
Belies it by the course pursued.
To make and keep a secret so
Till it was guessed — *guessed*, if you please —
To hold her tongue for centuries
And be part woman still? O no!

WHERE CULTURE FAILED

After years of application,
With a master's touch acquired,
She resumed her humble station,
Music-mad, Ambition-fired.

Something simple, she reflected,
Would most tickle her relations;
Consequently she selected
When they came to hear her play
“Home Sweet Home”—with variations.
Ere its last run died away
Spake her father, coaxing-slow:
“That is fine, we will allow, dear,
And well-done, we’re sure, but now, dear,
Play us something that we know.”

HAIRLESS AND HEIRLESS

Upon his head were fifty years :
(And little else.) To twenty
The maid *might* own. He had no fears,
Of earth’s goods having plenty,
That she would answer aught but “*Yes*”
When he his mind had spoken.
He hesitated, ne’ertheless,
To speak! The silence broken
At last, he made a lengthy plea
Unlike the “old, old story,”
Which seemed for all the world to be
A sort of inventory.
Her answer: “Hope I cannot give,
’Tis vain the matter mincing,
You are, sir, like your narrative,
Both bald and unconvincing!”

A MISCONSTRUCTION

“Does your wife put thyme in dressing?”
Queried Marjoram of Sage.
“Well, she does, you’re safe in guessing,
From an hour to an age!

Last night, sir, while she was making
Ready for a little call
I caught forty winks, and, waking,
Read the paper, ads and all.
Wrote a letter — two — and then I
Took a turn at smoking. When I
Rolled the seventh cigarette
She was far from reaching yet
The first stage of “prepossessing”—
Does my wife put time in dressing!?”

IF JOHN ALDEN CAME TO NEW ENGLAND
If by some strange dispensation John Alden should visit
New England
He would, no doubt, mark with wide-eyed amazement
the magical changes
Wrought by the Arts and the Sciences since the old days
of the forest !
But what would dumbfound him more than the 'phone
and the spark-spitting trolley
Is that nine-tenths of her people can trace their direct
descent from him.
Granting their claims are well-founded 'twould seem, with
a start of some ages,
Abraham's seed is not in it for numbers with Alden's, by
legions !

ASSERTION AND PROOF

If you discredit this, that wives are sold
In our enlightened land and years of grace
As evilly as in the days of old,
And at a quicker than their pagan pace,
Come call on me some day when mine is out
And, proving such iniquity prevails,
I'll show you spread my little house about
The Dead Sea fruit of countless “special sales!”

AN AWAKENING

When Bernice was learning to skate I decided
 Her slenderness gave no idea of her weight,
For all the enjoyment was hers, undivided,
 When Bernice was learning to skate.

But now, when at midnight she roars like a furnace,
 I pause on each lap of my journey to state,
Her daughter weighs fully a stone more than Bernice
 When Bernice was learning to skate.

THREE OLD BIRDS

Beaming with foster-motherhood
 She asked (still fiercely ruminant)
The hall-rooms latest occupant;
“And do you find the turkey good?”

At first he seemed to have no tongue,
 But presently he gravely eyed
His *vis-a-vis* and thus replied:
“Madame, they say the good die young!”

THERE'S A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

On most occasions you might take
 Estelle for “Silence” fled her frame :
When with sweet, tight-closed lips she sits
 You're sure to cry her sisters shame
For their distracting badinage;
 And when she smiles, their repartee
And wordy wit fall flat enough
 Beside her quiet brilliancy.

Her taciturnity destroys
The flavor of that ancient jest
That Woman talks most all the time,
And *never* gives her tongue a rest.
But there *is* an occasion when
On chattering she will insist
Fast as the jay proverbial,
And that's when she is playing whist.

A FATHER SPEAKS

I've read somewhere that when the patch was worn
A grace it lent the wearer
Which made the plainest faces less forlorn
And fair ones fairer.
The verses that I cite go on to state,
Lamenting that it is so,
This aid to beauty that could animate
A woman's phiz so,
Is now irrevocably out of date.

I wish to set the rhymer right, for though
I may lack much of his accomplishment,
I've four boys under ten and chance to know
That patches still obtain to some extent.

A VERIFICATION

A long, long time I paid
My honest addresses
A someday-monied maid,
And naught but caresses
Told her how my heart laid.
And why? I was afraid
She'd yes me no yes-es!

And when I spoke at last,
 Still doubting and fearful,
Though no sweet word she passed,
 But blushed and grew tearful;
Her heart was won, I knew,
Her heart, and dollars, too,
Which proved to some extent
 Two adages olden—
That “Silence gives consent”
 And “Silence is golden.”

TWO ON THE CAMEL

I

I've studied the tale
 Of the straw and the camel,
That picturesque mammal,
 And this I've concluded :
 We've all been deluded,
The straw that undid him was surely a *bale*.

II

But still I'm immersed
In doubt, as at first,
Concerning the fate
 Of Crœsus & Co.
When through Heaven's gate
 They venture to go.
This, though, I *do* know
There's nothing to trammel
 The average rich man to-day,
 If he, by some chance, should essay
The feat that's assigned to the camel.

THE OMNIPRESENT PESSIMIST

As I came saunt'ring home this afternoon
A sense of utter joy awoke in me,
And with the singer sang I, "Verily
These are rare days that wait on roseate June."

The sky was almost cloudless, and the bay
A sheet of silver, while a trillion wells
Of sound and scent wrought their enchanting spells,
Meseemed to make *this* the most perfect day.

But at the crossing of two dusty ways
One, travel-stained, my castle of Content
O'erset, my mind's calm sea turned turbulent,
With the assurance "he'd seen better days!"

THE FIRST CLOUDS

In the Drawing Room—one week after marriage.

"Please don't smoke here, my own,
You'll ruin drapery and curtain,
And, what's more serious,
You'll undermine your health, I'm certain!"

In the Library—a fortnight after marriage.

"You shouldn't smoke *here*, Fred,
Unless you want to split my head!"

In the Kitchen—a month after marriage.

"You can't smoke *here*!"

* * * * *

So I've sworn off? O no!
Go to the Club? I'll maybe later.
Just now down cellar, I
Smoke with the furnace, like a crater.

ON CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE

My! What a plight the child is in!
It means an instant tubbing,
(Where can the little scamp have been?)
With some, perforce, ungentle rubbing.

A half-hour since I set him down
With ev'ry stitch on snowy,
And boots that not a beau's in town
Could quite outshine, however showy.

Be sure he's gone upon the road
And fallen in a puddle
In spite of our *don't-go-there* code—
How else explain this precious muddle?

Mud head to foot, on neither shoe
The slightest trace of blacking;
Curls gone and hat on wrong side to,
Its strings,—one torn, one wholly lacking.

* * * * *

Sh! Nurse, bethink yourself a bit
And don't make such a bother:
The boy has only, as is fit,
Been out a-walking with his father.

CERAMIC MELANCHOLY

How blue they are! What is amiss?
Their lot seems not a bad one!
Why do they stand so long like this
And look, united in a kiss,
As if they'd never had one?

The present indications are
That naught can come between them.
Her pater *might*— a family jar
Suits him!— but though he isn't far
I'm sure he hasn't seen them!

Why are they blue? Has some small mind
Their manners been attacking?
Though hard of feature and inclined
To stiffish limbs, a certain kind
Of polish they're not lacking.

No, ears for critics they have not,
And clever must the shrew be
Who wins with railing half a jot
Their eyes from the accustomed spot.
Then *why* should they so blue be?

Friend, *your* conclusion has its flaws,
There's nothing much the matter.
Our loving twain are blue because
They're fixtures without rest or pause
Upon an old Delft platter.

THE OLD AND THE NEW ATHENIAN

When young Priscilla drove her cows
From Temple Place to Copley Square,
Or listened to a lover's vows
On Beacon Street, just as and where
Her fair descendants do, a spare
And simple gown by her own fingers made
She wore, nor other gowns she had,
But yet their portraits vest her in brocade,
Put patches on her cheek to add
Another charm, and powder in her hair.

We pardon them their small deceits,
Reflecting that some future race
Of wider minds and wider streets
May please upon its wall to place
Priscilla's *real* self, and trace
With pride its sure ascent from lowly things,
Ignoring mushroom growths between.
But meanwhile erudite Minerva clings
To bookishness and glasses green,
And judges old-time worth by pictured grace.

THE CLOTHING OF CUPID

We looked at pictures, Stella on my knee,
Our favorite diversion, you must know:
The book, a mythologic A B C
Of dead divinities, both high and low.
And under V we presently espied
The Queen of Love with Cupid at her side.

In flowing Grecian robes was she arrayed,
He, plump and pink and quite *au naturel*:
I made to turn the leaf — my hand was stayed
And then I knew I had a tale to tell.
“Who *is* that lady, papa?” asked my Joy;
Said I: “It’s Venus and her little boy.”

She conned the picture long and earnestly —
The rose-lipped god, the goddess, each in turn
Then looking up beseechingly at me,
She said, with all a mother's deep concern,
While two bright tears came trickling down her nose
“Why doesn't Venus buy her baby clothes?”

Quoth I, to comfort her: “The picture's old
To-day young Cupid goes in splendid garb,
A wallet filled to overflow with gold
His surest, nay, his only certain barb!”

* * * * *

And gentle reader, it is yours to say
If I told not some whit of truth that day.

FEBRUARY WEATHER

A foretaste of the by-and-by
Smiles in the genial sun,
And in the azure of the sky
Italia is outdone.
The morning's charms of gleam and glint
A trillion is their sum,
And on the fields the diamonds hint
Of emeralds to come.
To Beth the air's like wine
That needs no label lent it—
She has a valentine
And doesn't know who sent it!

And now, behold ! the light of spring
And balm of spring is flown!
The skies are dark and lowering
As are Siberia's own!
The snow that just entranced the eye
Again lies like a pall,

And even by a grate piled high
Beth closer draws her shawl.
In all things here below
Her interest's grown atomic—
She's opened it, and O
Her valentine's a comic!

IN THE AGE OF FANCY BOSOMS

What made the man conspicuous
I, somehow, couldn't tell :
His coat was in the best of taste
And fit exceeding well ;
His trousers—light, but not *too* light —
Were of a modest check,
And not an ultra stitch was in
The collar on his neck.

Th' extraordinary something I
Sought vainly in his hat,
For neither shape nor trimming gave
Me aught to cavil at.
His shoes, I found, were seemly for
A self-respecting man—
Not bottle-green nor ox-blood red,
But just a decent tan.

His tie of golf effects, so-called,
Was innocent ; and why !
The jewelry in sight you could,
I vow, put in your eye.
In fine I stewed and studied till
I felt defeated quite,
When suddenly I noticed that
The *shirt* he wore was *white* !

A TALE OF THREE CITIES

1894

Priscilla of these *fin de siecle* days,
Who from old Pilgrim stock boasts her descent,
Reads Emerson and Browning, and essays
A tilt with any sage at argument;
Goes to the Symphonies, plays whist in Lent —
Yet in one way she patterns her grandames,
For when a bit of gossip you bestow,
With *all* her ismic knowledge, she exclaims:
“I want to know!”

Who has come down upon Manhattan-isle
Through a long line of tradesfolk Vans, to-day
She perches high upon the social stile,
And plumes herself on being *distingué*,
And on her etiquette; but if you say
A thing is thus and so, strange to relate,
If to the belle your news is a surprise
She'll tell you that ‘you *don't* say,’ sure as fate,
With open eyes!

A piquant cousin of the hearty West:
“We got the Fair from you, you know!” said she,
“We've half your *gelt*, and soon shall have the rest,
And no one bluffs about his fam'ly tree!”
Stunned by her *verve*, yet anxious to agree,
“Our girls, with all their style, cannot compare
With yours for looks,” he said. And thus she spake:
With elevated brows, inquiring air,
“For Heaven's sake!”

AVERAGE PEOPLE

THE WOMAN

She may know a little bit of ev'ry science in Creation;
She may know the tricks of tradesfolk, and the art of
simulation;
Read your future with the aid of chiroscopic divination;
Write an idyl, solve a riddle, or deliver an oration:
She may speak each language spoken either side of the
equator,
And of Hebrew, Simian, Sanskrit, be a wonderful trans-
lator;
Tell you in an optic twinkling any scholar's Alma Mater ;
Drive a tandem, quote at random, play the *role* of com-
mentator:
May know ev'ry constellation that begems the Emyrean,
And the digest governmental of the festival Fijian,
Or the ne'er-completed pattern of the web Penelopean;
Play sonatas, song cantatas, make Herculean tasks pygmean.
She may cram her precious head with legal knowledge
over-full,
 And get herself admitted to the bar!
But by the rood, she doesn't know which rope she ought
 to pull
 When she wants to stop a car!

THE MAN

Though a man may boast degrees and be a manor-born
 logician,
Be too politic an one to ever be a politician;
Be his Club's loved chronicler and his set's first statistician;
Know all philosophic ethics; danger of slight erudition —
Know the jasmine from the jonquil, musk and myrtle from
 rosemary;

Be a match at judging gems for any old-world lapidary;
Tell a-trice your sauterne's brand, and name the vintage
 of your sherry,
And discuss at length the future of the footstool planetary—
May be able to prescribe a remedy for rheumatism,
Write a screed inscribed to Ibsen on the charms of Real-
 ism ;
Know true humor—never bore you with a third-rate
 witticism,
Sail a boat and kick a ball and yet repeat his catechism,—
Yet withal one thing he's lacking for he never, never can
With becoming grace and skilful learn to use a lady's fan!

LITTLE LYRICS OF SORROW *

I

Quite unpremeditatedly
 I made my mundane, small *entree*,
Impressionable, diffident,
 Upon my country's natal day.
And till I reached my lesser teens
 I took for granted the parade
And all the noises of the Fourth
 Exclusively for me were made.

Yes, the awakening was rude,
 But with the buoyant heart of youth
I kept my equanimity,
 Glad, very glad, to learn the truth.
'Tis not till now that I can see
 My error in a birthday's choice,
When generations four relate
 Its sequel with composite voice.

*The Author was born on July 4th and Washington is one
of his given names.

II

Misguidedly my sponsors gave
My country's father's name to me—
But doubt not that I honor it
Because I write ‘misguidedly’!
It is because through life I must
Be governed by a precedent
For ev'ry deed and utterance,
Yet fail of great accomplishment.

Just ponder my distressing state,
You who with tongues bond-free and glib
Know the delight of coloring
The cloth of an artistic fib!
I, Truth's drab road am forced to take
Day in, day out,—to just confess
A love for *harmless* Fiction's, to
Be taxed with my unworthiness.

EMANCIPATED

By my own act I've just escaped
A thraldom most appalling
Wherein Time bound me link by link
With fetters strong and galling.
From golden chains of pleasant weight
They grew to leaden slowly
Till I, suspectless and serene,
Was in their power wholly.
It's dissipated now and I
Could cut some youthful capers.
A brand-new lease of life is mine—
I've stopped my Sunday papers!

When first I crushed the Puritan
That ruled in me and read them,
They were a source of profit and
Of pleasure. Now I dread them.
From simple folios one might "do"
Before the morning service,
They've turned to things whose very con—
Temptation makes me nervous.
The octopus, the centipede,
The hydra—these are vapors
Innocuous and roseate,
Beside the Sunday papers!

I'm freed from all their siren charms
Of cheap critiques and aimless;
Of vapid social drivel and
Of Grundyisms shameless.
The youngest member'll mourn, no doubt,
That horror for sane scorn meant—
The colored supplement,—his ma
The "Hints on Home Adornment."
My girls will miss the "Fashion Notes,"
My boy the beauish draper's,
But then *self*-preservation's first!
I've stopped my Sunday papers.

THE MATRON SOLILOQUIZES

I hate to, yes, but soon I must
Wear glasses or take things on trust;
Time's is a slow and certain thrust
That can't be parried.
Was it not yester-year we met?
It *seems* like yesterday, and yet
Two decades'—almost—suns have set
Since we were married.

Ralph will protest *he* doesn't see
A hint of any change in me—
He always did (O didn't he!)
 Know how to flatter.

It's true I—well, prink just a mite
More than I used to think was right,
But that is *entre nous*, and quite
 Another matter.

A tell-tale box the mail just brought
In motion set this train of thought.
A valentine! No doubt I ought
 To call it folly!
But Ralph still plays the lover true—
And I like *that*? Of course I do!
A valentine at forty-two!
 Is it not jolly?

Heigho! Time flies apace indeed,
But Cupid's not behind in speed,
And here's a proof Love's nectar need
 Not turn to water.
The hand is not like Ralph's a bit!
Is this *my* name? I must admit
That glasses would not be—why it—
 It's for my daughter!

THE CONFESSION OF A MEAN MAN

When someone sent a valentine
To that bewitching wife of mine,
With manner studiedly supine
 I wondered *who* did;
But felt 't were futile to deny
That I'd a finger in the pie
When she, with an unswerving eye,
 Declared: "Why, you did!"

I've always deemed the man *verrückt*,
Be he a swain or Benedict,
Who by fair means or foul is tricked
 To waste his chink so.
Still, as I liked the sentiment
Emblazoned on the token sent
I must confess I was content
 To have her think so.

And when she started to revile
(Albeit 'round her mouth the while
'There played a happy little smile)
 With "O how foolish!"
I led her on with fine pretence
Of taking most profound offence,
And aimed—not in the grave-yard sense!—
 At looking ghoulish.

The episode's a twelvemonth old,
And now—the truth were better told—
(Guile's penalty to pay in gold)
 I' faith I rue it.
For lest th' unknown will not sustain
The good repute he helped me gain,
Although my pocket dreads the drain
 Why, *I* must do it.

TO G. W. : ON HIS BIRTHDAY

To prick with pessimistic tacks
That bubble tale of tree and axe
And show you possibly were lax
Instead of truthful,
Would be to rob of bite and sup
And turn to gall their sweetest cup,
The well-intentioned builders-up
Of morals youthful.

So we will grant your childhood eye—
And tongue ne'er looked nor spoke a lie—
No doubt when *bad* boys passed you by
You fairly trembled!
But that in vain you did not woo
A lady fair—a widow, too!—
Is ample proof that, later, you
At least dissembled.

And after Hymen's torch was lit
And she began to tease and twit,
(For Woman hasn't changed a bit
Since the Creation!)
We're safe in setting up the claim
That you upon occasion came
To practice—and we do not blame—
Prevarication.

AN EASTER SOLILOQUY

How early in the forty days
The penitential mood
Remark'd its strict observance sink
Deep into desuetude!

Its charm of novelty once dimmed
And where on earth's the pow'r
To force the sacrifices planned
In some pre-Lenten hour?

Yet, gladdened by an extra glass,
Jack will wax confident
Tomorrow that he has denied
Himself a deal in Lent.
And May will feel well-scoured as with—
The little Pharisee!—
A sigh she drops an extra lump
Of sugar in her tea!

A FORECAST

For Lettice who is only nine
Life still holds much of newness,
And dates in rubrics bright that shine
She finds of all-too-fewness.
So April First must needs run through
From blustrious March till May-day,
That she, our queen, turned jester, too,
May have a month of hey-day.
Housed by the season's frequent rains
Is't very strange she rules us?
Or that we take the greatest pains
To make her think she fools us?

A decade hence, we both foresee,
Time will have changed things greatly,
For Letty has unfilially
Essayed to fool us lately
In little things, alas! that were
Not food for April-jesting.

(Both grandmamas, of course, declare
We've spoilt her!—case is resting.)

Then, our concern will be to plan,
Should such a need aggrieve us,
To make her think, not that she *can*,
But that she *can't* deceive us.

AN EVEN THING

He—

I prithee, Pensero, dry your eyes,
If it be only for a little while.
I tire of this ever-doleful guise
That you put on, and long to see you smile.
Before we married merrily you laughed
Upon the slightest provocation; now
You have forgotten quite the pleasant craft
Of keeping hearts from sinking in the slough
Of deep despondence. *Then* you never frowned;
To-day the clouds hang on your brow for hours.
You give me April all the year around
Without a ray of sunlight 'tween the show'rs.

She—

Sir, if I've grown unduly lachrymose,
'Tis for the want of some substantial cheer.
No woman breathes who would not wax morose
With not a cent to spend the livelong year.
Before we married I'd at least enough
To pick up some small thing on bargain days,
And now,—believe me, it is very tough!—
I must give shopping up and matinees.
You, too, make April of each month for *me*—
Sir, it affrights me none, that awful look!—
For like the urchins on the first, you see
The string's kept tied upon your pocket-book.

A LAY OF MODERN MILLINERY

Imagine this complete display
Of blossoms on a single day:

The butter-cups and daisies pied
With spring's field-forces e'er allied:

The roses June has made her own
In every cheerful color known:

Ensanguined poppies, such as blaze
Like suns in August's drowsy ways:

The asters that in purple cool
Young autumn's windy garden rule:

Geraniums of vivid hue,
And golden-anthered fuchsias,—two

Old-fashioned flowers that often still
Are wintered on a window sill,—

And violets, the doubly dear,
Which now belong to *all* the year.

Green leaves and wisps of snowy lace
Among the posies have a place,

While ribbons,—yellow, *mauve*, *cerise*,
Or with all hues blent in a piece,—

And gauzes that with dew seem wet
The wondrous bower's bound'ries set.

What do I sing? A festal booth?
A Flower Show? No, in good sooth,
(And have you not conjectured that?)
It's only Flora's Summer hat!

UPON SAYING GOOD-BY

Well, dear, at least you start
Upon a perfect day!
I wish the sunshine to my heart
Would find its cheering way!

Just now it's dark with dread—
Why must you leave so soon?
Last year you'd not be forced, you said,
To go away in June.

The year before—you know
That was our marriage year—
You stayed at home—how long ago!—
All summer with me, dear.

Have I grown less fond since
Or practiced cold neglect?
Believe me, not a thousand mints—
How? Yes, the trunks are checked.

Write often? I should say!
I'm more than likely to,
Seeing I've been enjoined to play
Cashier each time I do.

Your train's made up I think—
More flowers? Why, what on earth!
You'll leave me on bankruptcy's brink!—
Of course, a lower berth!

What's that? You needn't fret.
I shan't have time to kill

Since *some* way must be hit on yet
To pay your outfit bill.

You haven't half you *want*?
Great—well, at least, don't cry!
Some things I *can* stand, that I can't!
Another ki—! Good-by!

REVERSING THE POSITIONS

(*Being one side of a conversation on July 5th*)

Albion lost another daughter
Yesterday. Who could foresee that
When she crossed the nahsty water
The result of it would be that?
Certainly *I* never thought to
Be won from my single churlhood
And a port of transport brought to
By a slip of English girlhood.

Eyes like corn-flow'rs out of Devon—
(That's the shire to which I owe her.)
Where they smile it's simply Heaven!
That profane? You do not know her!
Such a day for *such* surrender?
Hang tradition! I'm for scorning
Aught that stops Love's legal tender,
And, besides, she sails this morning.

What would my revered forbear say,
That helped win the Revolution?
Don't much care, but he'd, I dare say
None of suave circumlocution.
Fourth or not, I felt I couldn't
Risk the loss of Her Transcendence,
So I signed my, and who wouldn't?
Declaration of Dependence.

EXERCISING THEIR PREROGATIVE.

Sibyl scoffed at all the omens
 Given credence Halloween;
(There is nothing in a name!)
 Was she taken for the daughter
Of some yokel Verdant Green?
 “Not the same!”
Balderdash! But yes! O yes! she'd
 Join the others in the fun,
And the oracles were strangely
 In her favor, ev'ry one.
Love and riches, she would win them!—
 Sibyl now sung very small:
Doubtless there was something in them
 After all!

Emily in no uncertain
 Voice proclaimed her changeless faith
In All-Hallows horoscopes :
 One may wrest the Future's secrets
From the late October wraith
 Ere she slopes.
Come! The time is *now* propitious
 For the round of rites occult—
But each spell she cast gave Emmy
 An unbearable result.
Him she loved would never choose her,
 But another. She guessed not,
And the whole thing was (excuse her)
 Simply rot !

MAKING HER TASK EASY

Most men (and women) when 'Thanksgiving comes
Perversely cast about for evil haps,
Determined quite to find no luscious plums
Among the bitter fruit upon their laps.
Most, but not all, for I've a gentle wife
Who sees all sins met in unthankfulness,
And makes a point at ev'ry turn in life
Of finding good in inauspicious dress.

Indeed, *this* year so keenly did she feel
The greatness of her debt that, worried thin
By doubt, she came to me with this appeal:
"In giving thanks, O where shall I begin?"
I'd failed on this before, as well she knew,
But now I had a candid answer pat:—
"If, as you say, *I'm* all the world to you,
Give thanks for me and let it go at that!"

THE QUESTIONS OF THE DAY

(THANKSGIVING, 1898)

Not foreign policies
Nor ethics of right living
Are of the subtleties
Considered at Thanksgiving.
But where good appetite
Sits down with good digestion
Instead, "Dark meat or white?"
Is quite the leading question.

To-day is not the day
To overlook the Navy!
The Army, too, 's O. K.,
But let's discuss the gravy.

Your host with many men
May hold that War's a blessing—
War's clean forgotten when
He asks: "Will you take dressing?"

We shake all business cares,
Lay down all social crosses,
And more prosaic wares
Give place to soup and sauces.
No question, old or new,
Surer of favor high is
Than "Can't I help you to
Another piece of pie?" is!

THE DIVISION OF A THANKSGIVING BIRD

In triplets, if you please, I'll show
How far, Thrift managing the bow,
A turkey may be made to go.

The neck went first to clerkly Shears
Whose collars trespass on his ears—
He needed it, by all the spheres!

Miss Smith, who plays the harp and sings
Divinely (*sic!*) angelic things,
Lacked nothing when she got the wings.

And to my boon companion Jack,
Who summered on a cycle track,
Appropriately fell the back.

A maid of forty unposset,
Who says that Man's a flint at best,
Found tenderness in *one* male breast.

The Scotts, who boast but slender pegs,
Can 'gowf' in kilts and filibegs
Since served, ye ken, with sightly legs.

The liver Mrs. Grubb avers
Of all the gobbler she prefers—
There's something wrong (she's sure) with hers!

With metaphoric *mal de mer*
Smith suffers every when and where—
The seasoned gizzard was *his* share.

The household's daughter, thin and tart,
Declaring that *I* had no heart
Pressed on me that important part.

And thus the bird was lost to view:
Yet by some more than wondrous *coup*
Next day we *all* had turkey stew.

PAST, FUTURE AND PRESENT

The Koran, which in Allah's name
Exhorts to righteous living,
Deep in the context makes a claim
One grants without misgiving.
It's this, that since the earliest man
Drew breath—nor will until the last has—
The world's shown no face brighter than
The woman with a cloudless *past* has.

But in a sunny later year
A lusty troubadour tells,
His ballad making love's worth clear,
That of all seen of mortals,
The brightest face, or here or yon,
(With no intention to dispute your
Blest word, O Prophet!) shines upon
The woman with a pleasing *future*.

And I, I cannot well agree
With either seer or lyrst!
For here's a face would rescue me
From dumps the very direst,
Whose owner's still oblivious quite
Alike of past and future pleasant—
(She's looking at me as I write!)—
A woman with a Christmas *present*.

WINTER SPORTS—A CONTRAST

There's Percy in his Inverness
And all the latest frills beneath:
A blade dulled sadly in a sheath
That's worthy better steel. No less
His heart is heavy than his debts,
Though he disclaims a part in Care
And quite deceives us with an air
Light as the salary he gets.

And here's a chap whose wardrobe runs
To plaids and stripes of wondrous size;
He's cash to burn and wits to prize,
A stranger he to wrists and duns.
Deplore his lack of taste, confess;
By which he lives, the doubtful art,
But envy him the merry heart
Inside O'Brien's sealskin vest.

AN APPRECIATION

(*Of an old sport by one*)

The ‘royal game of golf,’ indeed!

How came such honor to it?

A nice diversion? O agreed!

But this is how *I* view it:

A famous way to take the air,

When you have termed it *regal*

You’ve conjured whist from solitaire

And called the finch an eagle.

If tramping downns tagged by a tribe

Of shuffling, snuffling caddies

Is pleasant, how would you describe

The hockey of our daddies?

Pea-coated, one’s less picturesque,

Than in plaid hose, I grant you.

And you can find an air grotesque

’Round hockey-sticks, now can’t you?

(The man-made clubs of golf are goods

On which Art’s banner perches;

We cut the others in the woods

From youngling oaks and birches.)

The new-old game’s all right, in short,

For summer days and sunshine,

But when it comes to honest *sport*,

Why hockey shines as none shine!

What time the grassy putting green’s

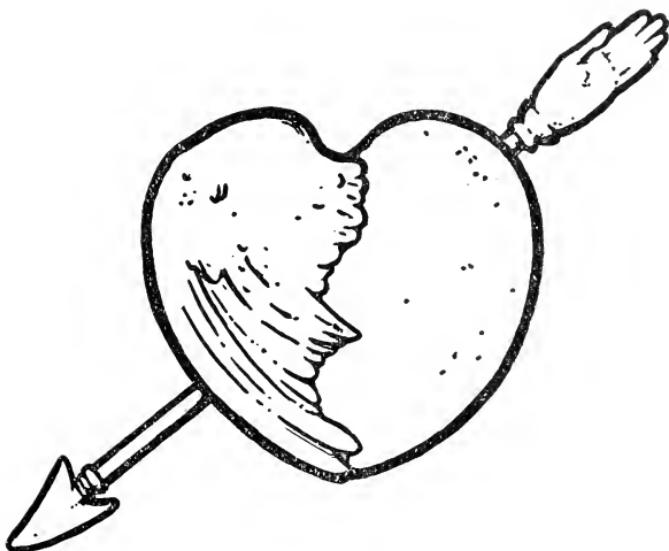
A green no longer vernal,

The fettered lake supplies the means

To happiness hibernal.

So when, perforce, in some lone spot
Your golf-ball's getting dusty,
And, likewise, banished and forgot,
 Your cleik and mashie rusty,
Don't smoke your pipe in idleness
 And swear your case is rocky,
But cut a stick and learn to bless
 The virile game of hockey.

THE CONCEITS OF A GENERAL
LOVER



WINTER ROSES

The roses on her hat are false as Art,
And *only* Art can make them:
Those at her throat will fade and fall apart
As soon as chill winds shake them ;
But ten small buds she carries in her muff
Sweet as all June's together,
That through life's length 'twould be delight enough
To shield from cruel weather.
With hot-house wares she's prodigal, indeed,
But—that! for all my ruses,
To give me *them*, though earnestly I plead,
She steadfastly refuses.

LEIGH HUNT REVISED

I kissed Jenny when we met,
Leaning o'er the chair she sat in;
Time, you rogue, who love to get
Scandals on your list, put that in—
Tell the world, but let it know
That her summers are not many—
Jenny couldn't kiss me, so
I kissed Jenny.

IN DOUBT

I tried to kiss her and she challenged me,
But not the ghost of an advantage lies
In choice of weapons since I cannot find
One that will match the daggers in her eyes.

If Cupid were my second I might beg
Or steal from him one little potent dart,
Though I'd not be surprised to find the rogue
Has emptied his whole quiver in my heart.

Are they in league? Or has he aimed too high
Half-blinded by the brilliance of her eyes,
And lodged two arrows there that I mistake
For hostile signs of anger and surprise?

THE CAPTIOUS FAIR

When I paint Constance I invest
The sylph with every taking grace
Of mode and mien and form and face
Of which her sex may be possest.
Fair in her own sweet right is she,
Yet with complacence she concurs
With me, assuming fairness hers
But by the picture's courtesy.

And is the elf to me thus kind?
Not so! Instead, her cruel eyes
Search out, enlarge, and censor-wise
Pass on my failings. Should she find
All manly charms of mortal ken
Some day in my poor person blent
She still would voice her old lament
That 'I am not like other men!'

HER VALENTINES 1898-9

Last year Jack gave Mabel a highly-wrought panel
Of festive, fat Loves on a tropical scene;
This year his coin flows in a different channel—
(They wedded while leaves were still tender and
green)—
For lately a need has arisen of flannel,
And muslin and wool and a sewing-machine.

A DRIVE AND ITS CONSEQUENCE

I drove that night. The roads were bad,
The horses off their mettle :
And worse, I knew next day I had
A precious bill to settle.
They cracked their little jokes behind,
As cheap as shilling crocks;
But yet, somehow, I didn't mind
With Nellie on the box.

She volunteered to share my seat —
We were not well-acquainted —
I thought I'd find her obsolete
And dull as she is painted.
But ere old Time had turned his keys
In half a fortnight's locks
I sent a ring from Tiffany's
With "Nellie" on the box.

HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED

How times have changed since shears and paste,
An idle hour, a little taste,
An almanac to rob of "lines"
Gave us a stack of valentines—
One for each house upon the block.
The rising generations mock
The old-year way—what do they not?
A time-piece gemmed, a house and lot
Are more consistent with *these* days!
Yet here is proof one still essays
To cultivate simplicity—
A box of pinks from Marjorie!

THE THRIFT OF ALICIA.

I sneer not at frugality,
 I who must practice it,
And scrimping where the brunt's on me
 I do not mind a bit.
I polish my own boots and press
 My clothes, refresh my hats,
And when they hint at shabbiness
 Make over my cravats.

Alicia takes pleasure, too,
 In small economies,
As I encourage her to do,
 My hope in future ease.
But I protest with high-held hand,
 When (O a woman's wiles!)
She keeps tab on her kisses, and
 A time-lock on her smiles.

To-day she capped the climax quite
 Of *all* economy,
(I cannot speak of it, nor write,
 Save confidentially!)
And with good Barkis she may be
 Well-called a little 'near'—
She's sent the valentine to me
 I sent to her last year!

THE CONCEIT OF A GENERAL LOVER

The usual monotony
 Of St. Val's day to vary,
I think this year that I'll indulge
 In just a mild vagary,
And make each one with claims on me
 An offering of flowers
Instead of runes in paper lace
 Or sweets in satin bowers.

Of course I first must study up
The language blossoms speak in,
(A tongue, I may as well confess,
I'm lamentably weak in!)
Else I might choose for Natalie
Some posy which dispenses
Suggestive fragrance meeter for
That wee nose of Hortense's.

So let me see. The hyacinth
For jealousy does duty:
The rose a sweet exponent is
For grace and pride and beauty.
Enough! 'Tis here my little course
In floral lingo closes—
A hyacinth for Natalie,
Hortense and Bernice, roses.

And yet, on second thought, perhaps
The thing were better ordered
If I send hyacinths to all
With just some green stuff bordered.
A *double* service *these* will do
Since they, the girls, Lord love 'em!
Are jealous of each other, I
Of each man's daughter of 'em.

THE PROXY OF A SAINT

(*Lines to go with Barbara's valentine*)
This grinning lump of devilment
In shabby blue
Will hardly—careless, impudent,—
Commend himself to you!
With tales of bloody border wars
His daily fare,

Small wonder he brings to our doors
Wild eyes and wilder hair.
No grace nor hint of grace is his
To sing or paint,
He swears, he smokes, and yet he is
The proxy of a saint.

And here may be a lovely gem
Still in the rough—
There are in old Earth's diadem
Stars cut from poorer stuff!
Love will some day with its sweet thrill
Make him anew,
And meanwhile, for a fee, he will
Help me make love to you.
So prithee smile upon him, Bab,
True-blue is he
From boots to bonnet with its cab—
Alistic A. D. T.

Smile, but restrict its brightness, do,
This is not I!
I'm waiting *here* to learn if you
Will see me by and by.
The violets I send are cold,
But sweet as they
And warmer far and worth more gold
The words I want to say.
And if you'd answer me—anon!
Take warning, please,
It's risky putting slights upon
A proxy of St. V's!

AT THE FEBRUARY TEA-PARTY

When I arrived in regiments trig
She stood dispensing tea and sally-lunns,
Transformed by stiff brocade and powdered wig,
The fairest of all Lady Washingtons.
In time I craved the favor of a cup
Of her own savory, delicious brew,
Which serving me and looking coyly up
She caught and eyed askance my buff and blue.
Her glance said plainly as a spoken word
In donning them I'd gone a step too far,
For my forbears wore red for George the Third,
And Mattie is a loyal D. A. R.

So when the urns were drained and growing cold,
To calm the torrent of a rising gorge
And justify my action I made bold
Myself to liken to that other George.
She listened, then incredulously asked:
“And wherein, pray, does the resemblance lie?
Take care, sir, that no innuendo’s masked
By the fine words with which you make reply!”
“It’s simply this,” I said, intensely grim,
“Where he was vanquished I’m content to be;
And what fair Martha Custis did for him,
Another Martha’s fairly done for me!”

A LENTEN WISH

I would that all the year were Lent,
For then Adele might be
As contrite and as penitent
For all her sauce to me,
Through twelve long, blissful months in lieu
Of forty fleeting days,
And tiring soon of rack and rue,
Resolve to mend her ways.

I would that all the year were Lent,
For maybe ere its close
Adele would find her substance spent
In easing others' woes;
And then, from routs a fugitive,
Reduced to poverty,
She might, with nothing else to give,
Give up herself—to me!

AT VESPERS

In solemn mood befitting Lent
She skurries to her pew,
And looks to neither right nor left
As she is wont to do.
I follow with a beating heart
Along the dim, wide aisle,
To find my coming quite unmarked
By either nod or smile.

(The church is cold to-night, I think.)
She does not even share
Her books with me and stands remote;
But when we kneel in pray'r
Some friendly power bridges o'er
The space between us, and,
Assured that no one else can see,
She lets me hold her hand.

NATALIE LOOKS FORWARD

With what good taste this Lenten maid
Is garbed. No haughty peeress
That Worth and Redfern serve can boast
A style so *sui generis*.
The ermine beastie at her throat,
The jet and velvet turban,
And in her muff the violets,
Proclaim she's strictly urban.

But these are minor matters which
'Twere frivolous to rave o'er—
Mark rather how devout she is
With Youth still in her favor.
Her kneeling pose is grace itself,
Her lips, they never falter,
But move like clock-work through the pray'rs,
The Collect and the Psalter.

Yet I suspect that she is tired
Of Lenten sacrifices,
And wearies for a swift return
To her small, pleasant vices;
For as I sat behind last night,
Upon her charms a feaster,
I heard her chuckle to herself:
“Just one more week to Easter!”

AT EASTER

The music, the flowers, the palms and the crowd
Well-groomed and perfumed are with youth re-endowed,
And even the cushions that cumber my pew
In old-year magenta look cosily new.
The saints though in glazier-set bounds sternly shut
Are splendid with smiles,
And the sun in the aisles
Lifts ev'ry heart out of its work-a-day rut.

And Milly, my neighbor austere, does she share
This general respite from winter and care?
Is *her* heart upraised, being newly unpent
From the nominal gyves of a nominal Lent?
Um—well—yes, perhaps!—and it's still hardly that,
For though lifted out
Of the groove, I misdoubt
Milly's heart's gone no further aloft than her hat!

A PLAN THAT WORKED TOO WELL

Quoth he: “Diana’s at her best,
The wind is down, the pond a glare,
And no one of her sister months
Is fairer than March now is fair.
Come, bundle up and get your skates,
To waste such evenings parlor-pent
Is little short of sacrilege!”
Quoth she: “I can’t! I’m keeping Lent.

“But, as I wouldn’t have you share
Unwillingly my sacrifice,
Go call for May. The pagan, *she*
Is *always* ready for the ice.
And,” (laughing,) “with true Lenten zeal,
Since she’s no *brother* of her own,
I’ll give you up to her until
The season’s over—as a loan!”

A fortnight after Easter he
Received “A few short lines just to
Remind you you were only *loaned*,
And not surrendered wholly. Do
Come up! I’ll be at home to-night
To no one else. Yours, Millicent.”
To which he answered: “Sorry, but
I can’t! You see I’m *keeping* lent!”

A LENTEN ADDRESS TO CAVILLERS

If Myra's eyes, which she should hide
Whilst making her responses,
Instead burn impiously beside
The dim lights in the sconces,
And when she afterwards should look
Soar dreamily above it,
Ignoring quite my offered book—
What of it?

And if the glowing swain who lolls
Behind the pillar yonder,
No grace his rectorship extols
Finds half worth while to ponder,
But in the seraphim that perch
About discovers charms that
Were better studied out of church—
What harm's that?

Shall not the maiden win a share
Of happiness in thinking
The prophet in the window there
(No doubt she's caught him winking!)
Has eyes like some one very dear?
It's nothing to cry '*Fie!*' for!
She may have matters grave *next year*
To sigh for.

And shall the boy not take delight—
Delight not Time's to cancel—
Remarking in the gilt and white
Madonna of the chancel,
A likeness to some precious she
Of flesh and blood? Remember
His pulse beats May time, yours, ah me!
December.

Carp on then! You can force at best
But tittles of devotion
From hearts that ruddy Youth's behest
Keeps in delightful motion.
Not *all* hymns that inspire and stir
The soul are in smug covers,
And no Lent's in the calendar
For lovers!

WHERE I COME IN

Love ne'er hath so emboldened me
That I could gently touch her hair,
But with rough hands March brazenly
Takes liberties and license there,
And makes incessantly to cheat
Love of his very own emprise
When Bernice ventures on the street
By throwing dust into her eyes.

From the blue pompon in her toque
Down to the hem of skirts perverse,
These winds run riot and provoke
Me to green jealousy—and worse!
They fan her fair skin till it glows,
But I'm—with confidence I speak—
The peer of any wind that blows
At painting roses on her cheek.

OF APRIL SUNSHINE

I love bright days when beats the sun's fierce fire
 Full hotly in my face, and so I rail
At April's way of whelming roads in mire
 And stretching over us skies spectre pale.
This morning, nathless, whilst the clouds repaid
 The anxious eye with naught but sombre tints,
I caught a glimpse of brightness that has made
 Me quite content with darkness ever since.
A crocus, many-hued, flamed in my face,
 A yellow daffodil gleamed through the pane,
But 'twas from *her* that I took heart of grace
 When I saw Phœbe tripping through the rain.

The chroniclers of Fashion's doings, who
 The lore of woman's gear have down so pat,
A deal of work waste on a satin shoe,
 And more upon the marvels of a hat.
They see so much by artificial light
 Of brilliant trinketry and furbelows,
It follows, as the day succeeds the night,
 Their views must be factitious as are those.
If screeds on party gowns attract, why you
 May still go revel in their arrant bosh
But fairer picture than they *ever* drew
 Is Phœbe in her boots and mackintosh.

THE WAYS OF BLANCHE IN SPRING

When Blanche apprised me that she would

 Go in for gardening this year,

I pictured grace and lustihood

 In Gainsborough and muslin sheer

 Selecting me a *boutonnier*

From bed or bush or trellis wares.

Or, gloved in yellow *mousquetaires*

 To shield her from their thorny stalks,

Cutting us roses as in pairs

 We idled down box-bordered walks.

And so my disillusionment

 Was sorry and complete enough

When I discovered she is bent

 On raising such plebeian stuff

 As greens and turnips. Jove! it's tough

These misty dawns that never break

To see her moiling with a rake

 (And all to not a soul's behoof!)

In overshoes and wide-awake,

 Or spading in a waterproof!

But hers is just an April whim

 I fear, if half the truth were told,

And when the tender shoots and slim

 Come struggling through the steaming mould

 Belike they'll find her ardor cold.

Last year a seed sunned by her eyes

Took root and blossomed—orchid-wise—

 And in a lonely heart to-night

The flower languishes and dies

 For want of just a little light.

A SONG OF SEEDTIME

Has April *always* been so fair
Between her not too frequent tears?
Such days have never been *my* share
In all my five-and-twenty years!
I've drunk the blue of sunny skies
At Como, Capri and Messina,
But in my own more beauty lies—
I'm making garden with Selena.

The borders of the shady mall
We've sown with white and crimson phlox,
And in the cranny of a wall
Laid down the seeds of sundry stocks.
That bed's for musk and mignonette,
And that for slips of sweet verbena:
The time flies as it ne'er flew yet—
I'm making garden with Selena.

A drift of snowy clematis
The porch will cover by-and-by;
And where we plant this chrysalis
A poppy's banneret will fly.
You know the saw—"All work, no play,"
But when the glance of smug Christina
(Hang chaperons) is bent our way,
I'm making garden with Selena.

I love the soil, but never knew
Such pleasure lay in planting flow'rs.
O April! play the laggard, do,
Make seconds minutes, minutes hours,
Hours days, and I'll sing lustily
Your praises in a smart sestina.
I'd have each day a week —you see
I'm making garden with Selena.

URBS IN RURE—A MOVING TALE

In vain the May wind wanders in
 And softly whispers me,
When sultry summer days are done,
 Of nights in Arcady.
But what great miracle shall *my*
 Arcadia restore?
The place that knew Calphurnia
 Will know her nevermore.

For months a Damoclean sword
 Hung trembling o'er us all :
We shut our eyes, and laughed and sung,
 But knew that it would fall.
'Twas on the year's unhappy scroll
 Immutably decreed,
That she must go—Calphurnia!
 And now she's gone, indeed.

She lives? Ah! Yes she lives, but where?
 Not where our hearts are still;
But in pa's new 'colonial'
 At East Westmorelandville.
A suburb—near, and yet so far!—
 Whence—O the cruel fate—
For him that's faring cityward
 The last train leaves at 8!

UPON BERNICE IN MAY

I like not May for reasons of mine owne:
And one is this, that Bernice then is prone
To squander ye faire Dayes, in foule Despight
Of my fond wishes, saunt'ring farre from sight
Thro Meddowes that an Ill denyes to me,
Where glossie butter-Flowres & Couslips be.

I like not May for reasons of mine owne:
And one is this, that Bernice then is prone
To turne a shire o' Couslips into Wine
Which, Candour loving, Ile not count divine
To pleasure hir. The sorrie Sequell's this,
That I sleepe many Nights without a kisse.

A SMALL ADMISSION

Blue sky, green fields, June air, a horse provided
That could proceed *sans* reins when necessary—
Small wonder I found driving pleasant, very.
(And Flo enjoyed it quite as much as I did !)

It was a splendid chance—I never miss one—
To say a pretty thing (Save your derision!),
And so I asked “Would life not be elysian!
If it were just a long, long day like this one?”

And Bob in ecstasy kicked o'er his traces
When she made answer, thoughtfully, demurely,
Yet with a twinkle in her eye: “Yes, surely
The lines to-day have fall'n in pleasant places.”

HAZARDS

I'm learning golf, the 'royal gamee',
A trifle late, perhaps,
But Sandy spaes that just the same
I'll beat thae ither chaps.
Already in a gowden week
I swear as weel as he,
And ken a niblick frae a cleik,
A bunker frae a tee!
Aye! vera sune I'll ken it a'—
Save how to keep my een
Upon the ba', the doure, wee ba',
When Janet's on the green.

From Sandy's "Yon's gey braw, my lad!"
I modestly infer
That my 'address' is no sae bad:
(Wad it nicht be tae her!)
My drives are unco guid, says he,
I play my hazards well,—
Ah! do I? 'Tis not clear to me,
And only time will tell.
Since bonny Janet golfing came
My bachelor eyes hae seen
That all the hazards of the game
Are not upon the green.

LINES TO HORTENSE IN JUNE

Hortense, 'twas when the leaves in crimson hillocks stood
Like sacrificial pyres about the autumn wood
That we first meet and I remember clearly that
You wore a feather, black, forbidding, in your hat;
A jacket tailor made, tight, of a steely blue,
The which I envied not proximity to you.
For from your distant mien—what else could one infer?—
I thought you colder than the leaves around us were.

And first impressions last. 'Twas in your sombre furs
I saw you next, Hortense. "Those arctic airs of hers
Would blight a Greenland rose—if such a flow'r sees
light!"'

I inwardly observed, and had a chill outright.
In modish ball-room garb I saw a deal of you
(Having the *sense* of sight), and marvelled that you grew
Colder and colder still—though when you waltzed with
me
I could *almost* believe your heart beat normally.

But now— June's be the praise—I know you as you are:
A sister to the rose, kinswoman to a star!

Not till the sweet month came and showed you at your
best

In simple things arrayed, had I so much as guessed
That summer in your face and soft winds in your hair
Could work such wondrous change and make you passing
fair,

Nor till I saw you with your snowy shirt-waist on
The possibilities of dimity and lawn.

! L. of C.

SHOWING CAUSE

Our summer haunt's a hammock gay
Beneath old trees
That shield us from the sun and sway
In every breeze.
On wings of merriment and song
The hours go by;
We're happy as the days are long—
Finette and I.

I love the hammock—to and fro
It cleaves the shade;
I love the spot in Mexico
Where it was made:
I love the path 'neath larches tall
Where first we met;
Summer I love—but most of all
I love Finette.

* * * * *

Reader, you say my song's a bore,
Its theme is trite;
'Twas used last year, and years before;
And you are right!
No doubt the statements you withhold
Are just as true,
But—whisper!—though all else be old
The *girl* is new!

THE MAGIC OF DRUSILLA

A small simoom at ev'ry turn—
It's leonine July!
My eyes, dust-lacerated, burn,
My throat's Sahara-dry.

But one forgets the heat and thirst
 Where happy I may go
To weed and woo, when woo I durst,
 What time the sun is low.
For sweeter than an April wood
 Is that thrice-favored spot
Which knows when day has gone for good
 Drusilla's sprinkling pot.

The paths that gasping deserts were
 Turns each an oasis
With all the nectar in its air
 That makes for summer bliss;
The lawn's from parched and ghostly shapes
 Drenched back to emerald youth;
Naught the reviving flood escapes,
 (Not even I, forsooth!)
And in the dripping, spicy box
 Is balm for all-day woes,
When—O the pleasant paradox!—
 Drusilla mans the hose.

OF SUMMER READING

The joys that summer brings us,
 Their name is legion, sure!
A-bush a winged choir sings us,
 And every leaf's a lure.
Deep purple groves intone us
 Chants ne'er transcribed by man,
And close-cropped fields enthrone us
 Each some new shape of Pan.
But ere the meadow greens get
 (Like Mollie) brown and stout,
The high-toned magazines get
 Their Fiction Numbers out.

Light as the down of thistles
Our summer books should be,
And bright as the epistles
That Mollie writes to me,—
Not allopathic doses
Of Grub Street stuff that shows
Man still intensely gross is
And Woman full of woes.
When Nature's face is shining
And not a cloud exists
One can't be bothered whining
With cankered pessimists.

And so *my* Fiction Numbers
Go on an upper shelf.
The tragedy that cumbers
Their pages of itself
Would make a new Inferno;
Their comedy's the kind
That makes one wish there were no
Quills comedy-inclined.
But *if* a book invites me
I can't respond, it's clear,
While Mollie daily writes me
The gossip at the Pier.

THE LITTLE ONE MAN WANTS

Man wants—but pshaw! you know the lines
As well as I! And it is so.
Desire's a little light that shines
Most brightly when the fuel's low.
Could I, for instance, still pursue
Some boon on which my heart is set,
Should fate propitious help me to
A seat on Sophie's wagonette?

You've guessed it! That's the *only* boon
I crave this side of summer's rout.
Give me a clear-skied afternoon
In August with the poppies out,
And though wealth, fame are still to win,
With no propensity to fret,
I'll find a score of Edens in
A seat on Sophie's wagonette.

I lack ambition? Well, perhaps.
That gift discriminately falls!
To those—shall we say favored?—chaps
A place in legislative halls!
Or stocks-and-bonds supremacy,
Seems all there is in life to get.
Give them their share, but let *mine* be
A seat on Sophie's wagonette.

POLLIETTE ON THANKS-GIVING

When Polliette bade me give thanks
For all the gifts vouchsafed me,
Recalling Cupid's recent pranks
I—well, in short, it chafed me!
And so, though innocence masked
Her eyes—bright as a star they!—
I looked in them and sternly asked:
“What are they?”

“What is my pelf, I prithee, worth
If you decline to share it?
My name may echo 'round the earth,
But if you will not bear it
Fame cannot charm nor any hues
Illume the clouds above me.
I'll ingrate be whilst you refuse
To love me.”

Returning my stern look in kind
She answered me: "And yet, sir,
Since all your joy's to me confined
There's *one* thing you forget, sir,
For which your thanks should rise above!
My most despondent brother,
'Tis though I love not you, I love
No other."

AN AVATAR OF YULE

She wore my violets. I thought
They've 'witched her with their woodland wine,
As tremblingly, unsure and shy,
She laid a cold gloved hand in mine.
'Twas our betrothal! Had I dreamed,
Or was love hid in love's alarms?
I kissed her hand alone—she seemed
Too fragile for a lover's arms.

When I came home in autumn, ill,
Heart-heavy, wan as grew the year,
I saw her first, impassive still,
In something very white and sheer:
So dreamily she welcomed me
From Fever's gyves on torrid shores
I likened her despairingly
To those pale poppies she adores.

But here, at last, this Christmas night,
As genie of the children's tree,
Her cheeks aglow with candle-light,
A new and lovelier lass I see.
With scarlet ribbons on her gown
And holly berries in her hair
She wears, go up the world and down,
All charms that make a woman fair!

THE TRANSIT OF MARS

When Eloise looks up the street,
 Puts down her work—starts—flushes,
And turns away that face so sweet
 Lest I should note her blushes,
I wish that *I* were young again,
 But soon she's blithely humming,
Forgetting me and all—and then
 I know the Captain's coming.

When Eloise with downcast eyes
 Once more bends o'er her stitching
And looks, as her bright needle flies,
 (If may be) more bewitching,
You'd say she wastes no thought on men,
 But O her cheeks are glassing
The red geranium near!—and then
 I know the Captain's passing.

When Eloise looks down the street
 With eyes wide-set and wistful,
Her cheeks as pale as any sheet,
 Her dear mouth drawn and tristful,
I wish that *I* were *young* again,
 For as I lift her sewing
She sighs, O such a sigh!—and then
 I know the Captain's going.

MARY'S SPINET

It's hard to tell who first sat down
Before the spinet which
Of Mary's own delightful room
Employs a pleasant niche.
Perhaps to some colonial bride
Who wedded pow'r and pelf,
It gave the airs less favored ones
Declared she gave herself.

The spinet stays, although the dame
Is gone, forgot the airs,
To greet me through the open door
As I go up the stairs.
I may not set my foot inside
Although I long to peer
About its case to see if it's
The real stuff or veneer.

I never know how dear it is
Till Mary takes a hand—
Or two—in practicing duets
Upon her concert-grand.
Then I, with gratitude to Time,
Remember, well-content,
No touch the spinet answers, for
Its playing days are spent.

THE SPECIALTY OF PRUE

But poor Bohemians are we,
For when the play is done
Though *cafes* blaze enticingly
We find home's better fun.
I see a something brown unpanned
At just the proper toss,
Her brother makes a salad, and
Fair Prue supplies the sauce.

The long day's doings we review;
Discuss, each as it comes,
The scandal of the avenue,
The horror of the slums.
And if the chat grows prosy then,
As we grow tired and cross,
With ready, real wit again
Fair Prue supplies the sauce.

Life, one may just as well admit,
At times lacks character—
An egg *sans* salt, a salmon fit
Without the Worcestershire!
But as I've said, (to her at that!)
He'll fret 'neath no such loss
To whose existence sometime flat
Fair Prue supplies the sauce.

THE LOVER FINDS A WAY

I'm on a year's probation,
We're both too young, they say ;
She's at her education
And *I* must go away.
So here I'm on the briny
Bound for some horrid spa,
Or burg remote and tiny,
To please Pauline's papa.
If I could drop a line each night—
But no! he said I *mustn't* write.

To-day we're due at Queenstown;
A short week old my vow,
I wish it were Pauline's town,
The time, a year from now!
Cheer up? I'm quite unable!
I've tried—yet just to say
“I love you, dear,” by cable
Would drive these blues away.
But—always the obdurate sire—
I promised her I wouldn't wire.

Said she : “Be diplomatic
And all will come out right.
My love won't grow erratic
Because you're not in sight!”
But O my heart is aching,
And I must ask her aid:
How *can* I without breaking
The promises I've made?
Why—precious duffer that I am—
I'll send her a Marconigram!

HEIGHO

Through the reading of the psalm
 Sweet and slow,
 Soft and low,
Fitting for the Sabbath calm,
 Someone's eyes were fixed on me.
 Without turning, I could see
Feathers on a jaunty hat,
Curls escaping under that:
 On her cheek a rosy spot—
 I confess my thoughts were not
Fitting for the Sabbath calm,
Through the reading of the psalm.

Through the singing of the hymn
 (There were two
 In the pew!)
Words got mixed and notes grew dim:
 So I slyly stole a look;
 Someone stood without a book.
Well, I offered half of mine
Pointing dumbly to the line
 They were at. This one,—O my!
 “Let me to Thy bosom fly.”
Words got mixed and notes grew dim
Through the singing of the hymn.

Through a noon of golden smiles
 Rang “Amen”
 Clearly. Then
Down the cheeriest of aisles,
 Hiding tell-tale eyes we went
 Side by side, with heads low-bent.

Not a body worshipped there
Who could introduce us. Where
 Is the charm of etiquette?
 Ah! my heart is wandr'ing yet,
Down the cheeriest of aisles
Through a noon of golden smiles.

AN AGGRAVATED CASE

Of the iridescent ribbon
 In her newest collarette,
I can mention ev'ry hue:
There's a dozen yellow poppies
 And a towering *aigrette*,
 Brightly blue,
On her most becoming bonnet;
 And she wears a hunter's green,
Natty, jaunty, velvet jacket
 O'er a skirt of raven sheen.
But though I know ev'ry duller
 Tint that makes her outward guise,
I can't tell you what's the color
 Of her eyes.

With her taste in books and music
 My acquaintance is not slight;
Just what flowers to bestow,
And of which swell shop's confections
 She'll pronounce the flavors right—
 These I know.
In despite of fad and foible
 How unstintedly endued
May a gentle woman's mind be
 She's shown *me*. Her attitude,
I can give you most minutely
 To each phase of Science, Art,
But know nothing, absolutely,
 Of her heart.

When I say I cannot tell you
 What's the color of her eyes,
It is in no sense a 'bluff.'
They have never, to my knowledge,
 Doffed their merry, dancing guise
 Long enough
For the point to be decided—
 At long range, at least! Her heart
I suspect has long since fallen
 To some other fellow's part.
But such smiles she makes a lure of,
 And my own poor heart thereat
Acts up so I can't be sure of
 Even that!

THE BALLAD OF AN ULTRA GIRL

Hortense goes always to extremes
 Whatever it's about;
One day has philanthropic schemes
 No Hirsch could carry out,
And drains her pocket to relieve
 A very doubtful need,
While on the next she may not grieve
 To see a fond heart bleed.

Last year she went in for a course
 Of calisthenics; got
A swell trapeze, a wheel, a horse,
 And Heaven knows what not.
But *this* year in her dressing-gown
 Spends *days*, nor 'trains' at all!—
Why, half the time she won't come down
 To see me when I call!

She finds a tale of times remote
 Whose *denouement* is right,
And must read *all* its author wrote
 Before another night.
But when I take her a new book
 Whose praise all critics speak,
She'll not deign it a single look
 Because "her eyes are weak"!

However, it is in her dress
 Hortense most plainly shows
The quite distinguished ultraness
 That makes her friends and foes.
Whatever modes in favor come
 Hers leave them in the shade,
For everything she wears is from
 "Exclusive patterns" made.

With all her whimsies I adore
 The maid of whom I sing,
But cannot feel that any store
 Of bliss her love would bring.
For this thought any, *every* while
 Would mar the married state:
If *loving* should go out of style
 How fiercely she could *hate*!

SONNETS



PATIENCE

When one is loved and loves, and all's confessed
With cheek to cheek, and throbbing heart to heart,
That sweet, sad-eyed divinity thou art
Which brings us Peace for regent of the breast,
While friends and kin mistakenly protest
Against our choosing 'til the salt tears start:
Which teaches us to play a sunny part
And smile at grief when grief is bitterest.

Seen through thy glass each dun cloud parts in twain
And shews the blue sky of a future year:
Content we have of thee when tearful eyes
Look sad farewells: endurance for each pain.
Love quick would languish, shouldst thou disappear—
Art thou not Love itself in other guise?

INDIFFERENCE

Dear, I can bear your anger patiently
And all the little pangs that it begets:
There lurks no meaning in your thoughtless threats,
They wound but slightly, though undue they be.
I can but wait your sunny self to see
Returned, and mourn meanwhile when care besets
You do not find for *all* your woes and frets
A better exorcist in love and me.

But, dear, I *cannot* bear your coldness, no!
The cruel line of silent, tight-closed lips,
And unlit eyes, as fixèd as a stone,
How these do torture me none, none can show.
I drift unsuccored of all passing ships
Upon a bitter sea, unloved, alone.

INGRATITUDE

I did but very little, little gave
Where much was due. But all I could I did
And all I had I gave, and—God forbid!—
Grudged neither. Was it then too much to crave
A little gratitude? To work, to save,
When save I can, for her; to rid
Her sky of clouds—this is my lot till hid
Is one of us beneath a green-thatched grave.

And Oh! the heartache and the bitter tears
When, after smiling on me one day thro',
She killed the sweet Contentment that should live,
To taunt me with the sloth of earlier years;
To tax me with the things I cannot do;
To covet still the things I cannot give.

DIANA'S BATHS

(*Intervale, New Hampshire*)

Where Kearsarge tow'rs, and gray Moat Mountain makes
Through seas of mist toward Heaven's changeless blue,
A crystal torrent born of show'r and dew
Comes tumbling through the thick of birchen brakes
To fill the silvern pools where Dian takes
Her midnight plunge, unseen of men's wide view,—
As chaste, as wanton still, as when she drew
Her bow in Latmos woods, by Ida's lakes!

In the dim light of stars, when no moon beams,
Here, who has aught of poet's sight may see,
Stretched on the torrent bank, seamed, glacier-worn,
Half waking and half lost in pensive dreams;
Grown tristful of his mistress' truancy,
The shade of young Endymion, pale and lorn.

SEA DOWNS

Upon Cape Ann's red-bouldered, rugged shore,
The swift, blue billow pitches its high sprays
Across wide slopes of furze and fragrant bays
Whose greyish-berried branches, autumn-hoar,
Nod wraithishly beside the marshalled corps
Of late wild-blossoms. Here the shortened days
Wear lovelier garments on their seaward ways
Than in the deep of sweet-mouthed spring they wore.

Though clover pinks be pale and asters wan,
The lamps of autumn goldenly are lit
Along the hill and in salt marshes lush,—
That man the gods have surely smiled upon
Whose canvas does but poorly counterfeit
This simpler artistry of Nature's brush.

THE ROAD TO "PARADISE" *

Barred from the highway's dust that seaward winds,
A stretch of sunlit sward, fringed either side
With tall, slim willows, looking over wide
And od'rous moors. To south'ard Ocean grinds
Along bare, glist'ring reefs; but no surf blinds
Upon this primrose path, whatever tide,
And who comes hither with his brush to bide,
An inspiration summer-long he finds.

The boom of hurtling waves, the whistling buoy,
Scarce break the quiet of this pleasant pass:
At left the old Patch-orchard trees entice
The traveler their shadows to enjoy.
Marsh-cosmos, saffron-tipped, gleams in the grass,—
Here stretches the rope-gate of "Paradise."

*"Paradise" is the popular name of Mrs. Phelps-Ward's summer home at East Gloucester, Mass.

IN AUTUMN LANES

Mark you these paths how dingy they have grown
Within a few short weeks. A pall-wise blight
Of dust lies thick on leaf and limb. The light
Of yellow mullein-torches flares alone,
Though dim and dimmer still, where we have known
A trillion tapers summer-trimmed and bright.
One lated daisy shews its gold and white
Deep in the grass, by some quick foot o'erthrown.

The thinning troops of asters wan reviewed;
Reached, the high-road, the lane's worse counterpart,
We conscious grow unconscious sighs between
That strangely fill the wider solitude,
Of longing, keen, impatient, in the heart,
For the return of Spring's own tender green.

WHEN WINTER WIDOWS ALL THE NORTH

When winter widows all the North and folds
Her purple woods, her yellow fields, her plains,
In pallish motley; when from pleasant lanes
The green he tears, and what of brightness holds
The autumn garden still—pale marigolds,
Late dahlias,—these, he drowns in bitter rains;
When black storms drag their weight of icy chains
Across the piteous whiteness of her wolds;

When high winds drive us from the window-seat,
Whilst chimney-voices only moan and hiss—
Still, blossom-crowned, fruit-laden, and replete
With ev'ry gentle thing that makes for bliss,
Her marvellous sweet mouth, and warm as sweet,
Uplifts the smiling South for us to kiss.

PALMISTRY

She takes my hand with the soft diffidence
'That seems a part of girlhood and proclaims
The timorous amateur; then glibly names
Each line thereon, but holds me in suspense
A sweet long while before she can commence
The oracle's deliv'ry. Like twin flames
Her cheeks burn up when finally she frames
The promise of long life and affluence.

If through some Gipsy strain she reckons dear
Her reputation as a prophetess,
Then by her pleasant art may she divine
That it is thrice secured if she will clear
My way to all felicity with "Yes"
In answer to a small request of mine.

LA COUP D'ESSAI

This is the picture: Study of a shore
Of sands impossible, and breakers green
With edge of such foam-lace as ne'er was seen.
(A silken flounce some stage Provencal wore
It minds me of!) Goliath sea gulls soar
Above a disc which is too pale I ween
For Dian's pallid self, yet sheds a sheen
Which brighter is than eye has 'held before.

A sail I note, too near the rocks by half;
As white as it, the hand rests light as dew
Upon my own, which wrought this "gem of Art."
She waits for me to speak—I want to laugh—
Then see the sky is of her sweet eyes' blue,
And she for her *salon* may have my heart!

SPRING

(*After Meleager—some 1966 years.*)

At last the snow fast by the wall,
Where longest it inspired my pen,
Has sloped, and daffodillies tall
 Nod like shock-headed little men
 Upon the bank above my den.
The street-piano makes its call
Each morning, and to hut and hall
 That Tired Feeling's come again.

But now the efficacy's spent
Of tonics, nor will treacle blent
 Wisely with brimstone oust the de'il.
He yields to this, and this alone—
(A case in point egad's my own!)
 The sorcery that's in a wheel.

THE SOP TO CERBERUS

Dog of full fifty mouths have you not grown
 In all the years since Orpheus twanged his lyre
 Of dulcet strings and strains, t'appease your ire,
A set of teeth that's equal to a bone?
On festal days has Pluto never thrown
 A luscious chop to you, at his own fire
 Done to the proper turn, in way of hire?
Or does your master live by bread alone?

Let me be trebly sworn; *I* have been flung
 To you too often by the awful horde
 Of scribbling hacks. I cannot stand the laughter
Of these daft mortals, though your ev'ry tongue
 Joined in one howl of hunger. For your board
 You may go to the Devil, Cer, hereafter.

TO CONSTANCE IN A PICTURE HAT

What new conceit is this of sombre hue
That hides the precious sunlight of your hair?
The plumes funereal have no place there
Among your dearest ringlets, in full view
Of those whose ways with brightness you endue
Best, most, when least adorned. Dear, have a care
Lest they come soon to think the darkness fair
Perceiving how less dark it is o'er you.

You 'sit' today? Ah! Well, I can believe
Your beauty dazzles unaccustomed eyes—
But sunshine offered, who takes clouds in part?
You say you need *both* light and shade to weave
The picture's cloth? Yourself the light supplies,
Take all the *shadow* from my anxious heart.

TO CONSTANCE ON ALL-HALLOW EVE

You scout the nonsense of your weaker kin
Who in the Future's book are fain to peer,
And properly, no doubt, though 't is not clear
Indulging such chimeras is a sin!
Tradition's ever seemed a sturdy twin
To that Romance which you declare so dear,
And all its fairy folk for many a year
Have had a bright, warm place my heart within.

You scorn the supernatural. *I* refresh
My thirsty soul with myth and mystery.
To dusty fact and shabby verity
Ah! Constance here's no convert to enmesh.
Shall I recant, think you, whilst I still see
A witch before me in the very flesh?

LA CHRYSANTHEME

Diane, she carried to the play last night
A bunch of autumn-roses which I claimed
Held ev'ry color tongue or pen had named.
One's petals as soft, summer clouds were white:
One golden as the goddess' "bow of might";
And 'twixt these twain of heart's-blood hue one flamed
Whose gaudery a purple cluster shamed
A-tint from Tyrian-deep to lilac light.

And still I found to-day I had misdeemed
For at the meet she wore as amulet
A dozen buds whose hue I could not quote.
Diane, she triumphed in my plight, it seemed,
Till, when on homeward roads she mocked "Not yet?"
"Fox-red" quoth I, "the shade of reynard's coat!"

THE DYSPEPTIC TO HIS FAMILIAR

O Dire! O Dread! that holds me still in thrall
Through days that were beatic otherwise,
Through nights felicitous but for the sighs
Which mark the painful minutes as they fall;
O Merciless! O Mad! I've yielded all—
My hope, my rarebits, pastry, peace and pies!—
But now, before my broken spirit flies,
Grant me a boon, a boon exceeding small.

O Prince Inquisitor! it is but this:
Though in an hour again your torments rage,
Merely a respite brief, an armistice
In which to eat, with no pang to assuage,
Suggestive of my awful vassalage,
One more Thanksgiving dinner steeped in bliss.

TO A WISHBONE

O relic of our Christmas cheer!
When you are shortly called to play
The role of arbiter, I pray
Let it irrefutably clear
From your dismemberment appear
That Grace shall have whate'er she may
In her own artless, heartless way
Decide pre-eminently dear.

This is not magnanimity,
But simply that I think if you
Grant her her wish she may, so blest,
Elated by your augury,
At last, as only she can do,
Grant mine, a thousand times expressed.

A NEW YEAR'S SONNET IN DIALOGUE

MADGE (*brightly*)

Good morning! Did you watch the Old Year out?

TOM (*testily*)

Good nothing! No! I watched the New Year in.

MADGE (*in surprise*)

Why, what's wrong, Tom? You're uglier than sin!

TOM (*meaningly*)

I'm not the *only* one knows how to pout!

MADGE (*smiling*)

That few excel you at it's clear!

TOM (*insinuatingly*)

No doubt!

I had a teacher—(*fiercely*) Madge your humor's thin.

MADGE (*conciliatorily*)

I grant it and am ready to begin

The day afresh—

TOM (*sotto voce*)

Now for a wordy bout!—

MADGE (*not heeding*)

By wishing you a year of happiness.

TOM (*dejectedly*)

Your wish is vain. Last night you rang the knell

Of all my hopes.

MADGE (*repentantly—after a pause*)

I'll kiss you now—(*in perturbation as Tom*

gets up)

Not hard!

Just as an earnest, neither more nor less,

Of my—(*hesitates*)

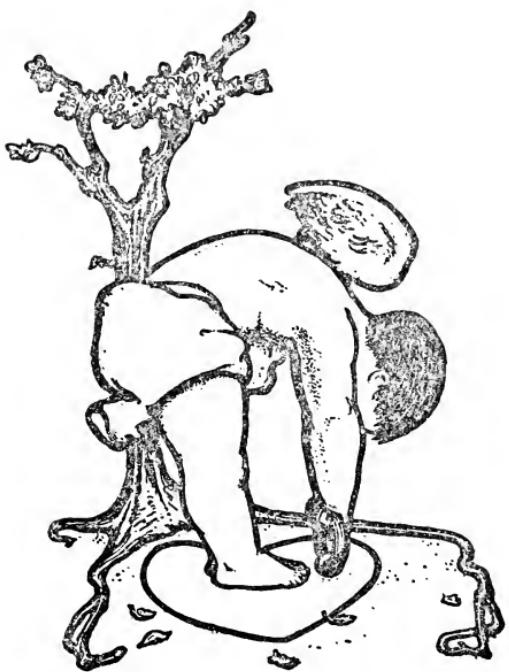
TOM (*eagerly*)

Yes, yes, an earnest of your—Well?

MADGE (*gravely*)

Sincerity and sisterly regard.

IN GALlic BONDS



QUATRAINS

UNRECOGNIZED

To him who years in vain has plied
His brush, the saddest words of pen or tongue
Are not “Alas! it might have been”;
But these: “Unwept, unhonored and unhung”.

WOLF! WOLF!

My wife smelled fire for twenty years
Each night when she awoke;
But when at last we had one, did
Not even smell the smoke.

A MODERN INSTANCE

Küssner, he vowed, should do her miniature
Ere of the honeymoon was spent one half;
But brought home to her, when a year had passed,
A club-rate ticket for a photograph.

A MARITAL NECESSITY

The man who finds his married life
From th’ old too sudden a transition,
Should have, without a doubt, a wife
Like Cæsar’s,—quite above suspicion.

ON A POETASTER

“I’m a poet of wonderful moods!” he declared,
But after an hundred offences
His Public retorted: “You’re rather, poor wight,
A poet of wonderful tenses!”

AN OPTIMISTIC TAILOR

Brown makes his work a *shear* delight,
For, like the Spanish Don's,
His peace of mind thrives well on cuts,
And “all his geese are swans!”

THE INFLUENCE OF ART

For his seven prudent virgins he employed a single model
But, having finished those,
When he tried his best to press her into service for the
others
She refused point-blank to pose.

AND THERE ARE OTHERS

His wife counts this among her direst woes:
That Jenkins can't, or *wont* turn out his toes.
But what, in truth, embittereth her cup,
Is the hard fact that he'll not turn them *up*!

THE POWER OF SLANG

The power transmutative of slang
With wonder strikes me dumb;
The man once labelled a ‘sardine’
A ‘lobster’ has become !

THE NATION'S BIRTHDAY—AND MABEL'S

Though cannons boom, and east, west, south and north
“Old Glory” at a patriot touch unfurls,
With what heart can I celebrate *my* Fourth,
Seeing the Other Three are also girls?

TRIOLETS

WINTER VIOLETS

Here are violets, dear,
And a Honiton collar.
For your natal-day cheer,
Here are violets *dear*,
Dearest flow'rs of the year.
(At just twelve for the dollar!)
Here are violets, dear,
And a Honiton collar.

HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

Phœbe is only sixteen
So there is hope for me yet,
Though to-day's cold her demean.
Phœbe is only sixteen:
When *twenty* years she has seen
She'll be less of the coquette.
Phœbe is only sixteen
So there is hope for me yet.

CONVERTS

I

I quite abhorred the minuet
Till, last night, I saw her begin it.
A walk to dirge-like music set—
I quite abhorred the minuet;
But now I never shall forget
The *matchless Grace* that I saw in it.
I quite abhorred the minuet
Till, last night, I saw *her* begin it.

II

With heavy heart I watched them dance
Till Amy tempted *me* to try it.
These loons I could not countenance,
With heavy heart I *watched* them dance,
It grew light as her feet, her glance,
When I *joined* them—I can't deny it.
With heavy heart I watched them dance
Till Amy tempted me to *try* it.

RONDELS

ON HER KITCHEN APRON

This is the panoply in which she takes
The household's strongest points with toothsome hail.
The daybreak charge is in alluring cakes,
At night, the lead of biscuits turns us pale.

A host that in the still hours shall assail
At noon lurks 'neath a pie's deceptive flakes.
This is the panoply in which she takes
The household's strongest points with toothsome hail.

To mark her sweet importance when she bakes,
To see her in this culinary veil,
Is to forget Dyspepsia's awful flail,
The night attacks, the mid-day pangs and aches.
This is the panoply in which she takes!

WHEN WOUND A FORESTER SO BLITHE A HORN

When wound a forester so blithe a horn
As did my fair beside the wood to-day?
Not bugle echoing along the morn,
That bears the tall, swart huntsman's breath away,
Nor reeden pipe of elves in midnight play
Could thrill me so, let me be trebly sworn.
When wound a forester so blithe a horn
As did my fair beside the wood to-day?

If her clear trumpet no silk cords adorn,
The perished harps of eld, while sweet were they,
Shed no such sweets! With waiting of me worn,
Through her dear hands she blew my name. Ah! say
When wound a forester so blithe a horn
As did my fair beside the wood to-day?

RONDEAUS

REFLECTIONS

Adele's cheval dares more than I!
She frowns; a frown is her reply:
 She laughs (the ripple of a brook)—
 The glass returns her happy look,
Or gives back mutely sigh for sigh.

But *my* response to glances wry
Must be a smile; a pitying eye
 Must still such sobs as erstwhile shook
 Adele's cheval.

The mirror will not falsify
E'en mildly. I am forced to—why!
 My pretty fibs would fill a book.
 Scorned still, indeed its cosy nook
I envy and its favor high,
 Adele's cheval.

MY CHIFFONIER

My chiffonier, so dear to me
In bachelor days, won Dorothy:
 "This cubby-hole will take my hat,
 The small drawer at the top— why that
Is just the place for gloves!" said she.

"You do not mind? I may? *Merci!*
Down here I'll keep my lingerie;
 Veils here—" and so she schemed it at
 My chiffonier.

At first I owned a corner wee
For 'rings and things', but latterly
 My trunk's my wardrobe's habitat.
It holds not even a cravat
Yet it is still (by courtesy)
 My chiffonier.

THE HIGH COIFFURE

(*A short man loquitur*)

The high coiffure, I read to-day,
Is coming in, perhaps to stay;
And think I see on Bertha's brow
A golden coronet, and how
Kate's curls will look 'done' the new way.

To little chits, like Grace and May,
Whose height will grow with such display,
'Twill be a boon, I must allow,
The high coiffure.

As for the tall and *distingue*,
What need of tressy crowns have they?
There's Blanche, for instance, who I vow
Towers quite a head above me now!—
Ah! pity me should *she* essay
The high coiffure.

TO SKATE WITH HERMIA

To skate with Hermia when stars frost-bright
Gem all the canopy of winter's night,
And nearer earth, as lovely as the skies,
Beam soft on me still other stars—her eyes!—
This is the sum of boreal delight!

Though runners gleam where roads stretch hard and white,
And dreamy measures to the dance invite,
My choice shall ever be—a fond and wise—
To *skate*—with her.

A new Lysander, like the old, to flight
I tempt my Hermia, and, through some rite
Of fairyland, find where the moonlight lies
A rosebud blowing though the snow-bird flies.
Who would not leave all other joys (who *might*!)
To skate with *her*?

AN EXPLANATION

He passed the hat—and willingly, although
He thoroughly abhors an outward show
 Of charity, believing that no good
 Results from public giving—always would
Prefer his alms in private to bestow.

On this occasion, nathless, with a slow
And measured step, expectance bringing low
 And disappointment to the neighborhood,
 He passed the hat.

'Tis strange with his convictions he should go
Out of his way to do it, but we grow
 At once in years and wisdom. Signs that could
 Not be by a worse dolt misunderstood
Reminded him 'twas April first, and so
 He passed the hat.

TO BERNICE IN LENT

Lenten maid, downcast, demure,
Where are the smiles that were lure
 O' those by their sweetness that swear ?
 Is it writ you must forbear
Smiling ? your eyes' light obscure ?

A nun it has turned you, and your
House to a cloister, and, sure,
 All my old happiness there,
 Lent unmade!

Come now, your posing is poor!
Confess it, your thoughts are *en tour*,—
 While your lips move through a pray'r—
 To a gay some otherwhere!
Your moods! *This* one's worst to endure,
 Lenten-made.

ON MYRA'S HEART

This House To Let!—the agency
Is Cupid's, and he holds the key;
The tenant must be young and hale,
Honest, of course, and without fail
One he can recommend to me.

Nay, Cræsus, take your gold and flee
Back to your brokers instantly,
You're misinformed, it's *not For Sale!*—
This House *To Let!*

If I can find the proper he
A life-long lease I'll let it be.
Construction modern, nothing frail;
In good repair—a mere detail—
And warm—that I will guarantee!
This House To Let!

WHAT HARRIE SAID

What Harrie said I could not guess—
I, at the furthermost recess
Of the long drawing-room, between
The white of curtains and the green
Of palms,—a screen of loveliness.

No quidnunc I, and yet, no less
I longed to know, I must confess,
Since all unwitting on the scene,
What Harrie said.

Unheeding physical distress
I crouched till Mabel's whispered “yes”
Stole through the afternoon serene,
And *then* how much could I misween,
When she returned his warm caress,
What Harrie said?

WHEN THE KISS HAD BEEN TAKEN

That I tried to shun the snare
You'll admit if you are fair.
Without lifting eyes or head
All the afternoon I've read
Here,—you pouted over there.

I tried every plan, I swear—
When I felt that I could dare;
Yours, of counting ten, instead,
That I tried, too!

But when you leaned o'er my chair
I could *not* resist that pair
Of sweet lips although they plead.
And now that your worst is said,
I am sorry, I declare,
That I *tried* to.

THE TEA SHE BREWS

The tea she brews is awful drink:
(Imported from Ceylon, I think,
Or other Oriental shore!)
I never had the like before,
Unpalatable, quite, as ink.

At any rate I do not shrink
From quaffing. Cup on cup I sink,—
I do *so* love to see her pour
The tea she brews.

Or stoup or glass may clash and clink
With nectars brimmed that flash and twink—
Le, wine shall take me nevermore
While she besweets with bounteous store
Of smiles that part her lips' deep pink,
The tea she brews.

OF A FANCY SKATER

What a figure he cut! ('Twas an "8" so he said!)
Though the glittering pond's was a generous bed,
 He found it well-filled and he could not evade
The facts that his trousers had suffered a shade
And his coat was in need of a needle and thread.

To 'do' a spread-eagle he shortly essayed,
Encouraged thereto by the smile of a maid,
 But alas! and alack! 'twas himself that he spread—
 What a figure he cut!

We teheed and we 'rahed and he called us ill-bred,
Yet anon, his ambition not utterly dead,
 Set out with more skill than he yet had displayed
To do the back roll upon one shining blade,
And (my kodak at home!) promptly stood on his head—
 What a figure he cut!

HAS LENT A CHARM

Has Lent a charm that men and maids should flee
The worldly ways that ring again with glee
 And go (*pro tem*) by quiet paths instead?
The cowl but ill-befits Karl's curly head,
And Ursula, a sorry nun is she!

The yearly thirst for goodness is to me
A baffling, dark, perennial mystery
 Which often deeper grows when I have said,
 Has Lent a charm?

To Kate, at least, whose cruel coquetry
Has given place to kindness frank and free,
 And who pours balm upon the wounds that bled
First by her lingual sword-thrusts deep and dread,
The penitential season verily,
 Has lent a charm.

AS GRACE UNPACKED

As Grace unpacked a fine defence
She put up for her negligence—

 Not writing—‘*thought I wouldn't care!*’

 But from my seat,—the lowest stair—
I vowed I *did*, with vehemence.

A pause. With wistful eloquence:
“*I'm glad I'm home!*” she said, and thence
 Our talk took flights three cannot share,
 As Grace unpacked.

Say, could I meet sweet penitence
With hints of cold indifference?

 Not I! I straightway shook Despair
 To *live* again, for everywhere
Rose hues stole into evidence
 As Grace unpacked.

WHAT COULD SHE DO

If I kissed you would you be in-
 Dignant with me—make resistance?
Flush and blush and order me in
 Tragic tones to ‘keep my distance’?
Break your pretty voice in two
 Calling someone to assist you--
Tell me, sweet, what *would* you do
 If I kissed you ?

If you kissed me I might scold you
 Under certain circumstances;
And at more than arms-length hold you
 To discourage your advances.
But if none were near but you--
 As at this minute—to assist me,
Tell me, please, what *could* I do
 If you kissed me?

A DISSEMBLER

"To the letter that you sent
I have not a word to say.
All your keep-sakes, tear-besprent,
I return this very day.
I've been true and you protest, dear,
That I might have loved you better;
But I follow your behest, dear,
To the letter."

(To the letter.) "You have freed
Me from bonds that 'gan to chafe
And a harmless sort decreed
Larks that lately seemed unsafe.
Ev'ry time that you are read you'll
Loose another galsome fetter,
And I'll follow the old schedule
To the letter."

THE MAIDENS TO ST. VALENTINE

Hail! Saint Valentine, hail to you!
'Spite of your ill-natured flings.
Modesty had tacked a veil to you
But for your beautiful wings.
Let those who choose to, make light of you,
We never cared for a pale saint;
Love take new life at first sight of you,
Hale saint!

Hail! Saint Valentine, hail to you!
Eke to the gauds you bestow—
Saying sweet things must grow stale to you!
Why you enamish us so
Never has been very clear to us.
Must be because you're a male saint
That you're surpassingly dear to us.
Hail Saint!

TWO RONDEAUS

Ante-Nuptial

If you love me I'm content,
Life with you is worth the living:
Yours my heart; I'll ne'er repent,
Ne'er, I'm sure, regret the giving.
Little reck I when you're near,
What's beneath, around, above me—
What is sorrow, care, or fear,
If you love me ?

Post-Nuptial

If you love me you would not
See me look so worn and threadbare:
Seems you wouldn't care a jot
If I went with feet and head bare!
Take your old arm from my neck,
Kisses neither boot nor glove me!
Write me out a decent check
If you love me.

AS THE WORLD GOES

I

When she married, often she
Forcefully asseverated,
On the threshold-throne she'd be
Sovereign sole, nor dominated
By her chosen minister:
Others might be held and harried;
But no man would dictate *her*
When *she* married!

When she married—as she did—
Found her throne of Love rose-hidden;
And she walked as she was bid
Without knowing she was bidden.
He could reign enough for two,
And her maiden plans miscarried:
She became the *gentlest* shrew,
When she married.

II

When he wedded, so he said,
He'd none of the bonds that tie men!
She, his choice, would know who led
Ere they'd quit the shrine of Hymen.
She might make and mend his things;
See him fed and softly bedded:
He would hold the house-purse strings
When *he* wedded!

When he wedded, he would check
Butchers', grocers' bills, and bakers';
And would find *him* no soft geck,
Milliners and mantua-makers!
He would manage stern and well,
Marriage he in nowise dreaded;
But the records do not tell
When he wedded!

UNDER WHITE APPLE BOUGHS

(*Rondeau Redoublé*)

Under white apple-boughs Roger and I
Romped in the grass with the sweet blossoms sown
When slight, pale Lois came buoyantly by,
Joined us and made our fine frolic her own.

What was her voice like? A bell's dulcet tone!
What were her eyes like? Why, surely the sky!
We were leal subjects about her green throne,
Under white apple-boughs, Roger and I.

When were winds so like a lover's soft sigh?
When has the sun so entrancingly shone?
Thus did I question, while Lois, half shy,
Romped in the grass with the sweet blossoms sown.

Clouds from above us like magic were blown,
Arcady stretched past the reach of the eye,
Where, just before, the grey orchard had grown,
When slight, pale Lois came buoyantly by.

How dark days drag, and how happy ones fly!
So the bright hours and happy have flown
Since Lois, failing, with spirits still high,
Joined us and made our fine frolic her own.

Lois seeks health in a kindlier zone;
Roger, by some hasty hand, did he die
One autumn day, and I'm here all alone—
O for the dole in a year that may lie!—

Under white apple-boughs.

THE TRIBULATIONS OF TRYPHENA (*Pantoum*)

When Tryphie checks the month's accounts
She waxes wroth and eloquent.
The butcher's overcharged an ounce,
The grocer's bill is 'off' a cent!

She waxes wroth and eloquent—
Did we have sweetbreads on the first?
The grocer's bill is 'off' a cent!
Well, if this isn't quite the worst!

Did we have sweetbreads on the first?
Just see if *you* can make that out!
Well, if *this* isn't quite the worst—
To debit us with *sauer-kraut*!

Just see if you can make *that* out!
The very idea makes me ill!
To debit *us* with *sauer-kraut*!
This must be Guggenheimer's bill!

The very idea makes me ill!
And cheese—we never *look* at cheese!
This must be Guggenheimer's bill—
O have a little *patience*, *please*!

And cheese—we never look at cheese!
What shall, what can a woman do?
O have a little *patience*, *please*!
Who *will* I talk to if not *you*?

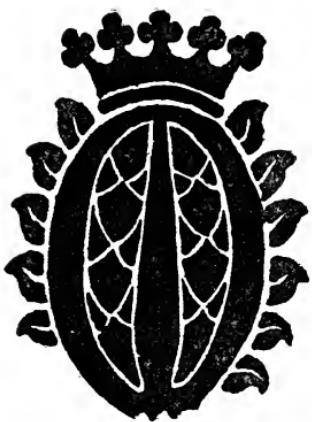
What shall, what *can* a woman do
When every, blessed thing goes wrong?
Who will I talk to if not *you*?
You know my *nerves* are far from strong!

When every blessed thing goes wrong,
(Stuffed dates at fifty cents a pound?)
You *know* my nerves are *far* from strong!
(The wretch! Said he'd send 'samples' 'round!)

Stuffed dates at *fifty cents a pound!*
Now *where* does Jane use so much lard?
(The wretch said he'd send *samples* 'round!)
To keep my temper's pretty hard!

Now where *does* Jane use so much lard?
The butcher's overcharged an ounce!
(To keep *my* temper's pretty hard
When Tryphie checks the months accounts!)

BALLADES



BALLADE OF ENTREATY

(*PHYLLIS TO DEMOPHOON.*)

By what calamitous mischance
Your homeward galley came to keel
Of Sithon's bays the blue expanse
But cold Neptunus can reveal.
Nor he, nor mightier Zeus can heal
These sapping wounds that yawn apace,
Till you for passionate woe or weal
Come back, my Love, come back to Thrace.

Your hero-sire's deliverance
Though she had compassed with the zeal
Of love, no tender sustenance
To Ariadne did he deal
Pang-torn at Naxos, and I feel
Than hers more grievous is my case.
Ere Madness sets on me its seal
Come back, my Love, come back to Thrace!

My pleasant shores lie in a trance
Deep as the winters that congeal
The blood whose poor inheritance
Tenebrious Scythia is. The steel
Of dolorous skies strikes till I reel
The heart you wakened, and this place
Re-echoes with my vain appeal:
Come back, my Love, come back to Thrace.

You Zeus made comelier than leal;
Me, for an almond-tree's embrace
For aye—like that whereby I kneel—
Ere you come back, my Love, to Thrace.

BALLADE OF LONGING

(*Ballade à double refrain*)

Regnant, with glitter and glare,
Dust, and a host of deceits,
Summer burns red in the air;
Fever stalks mad through the streets.
O for the shorewise retreats!
O for the salt breeze that yields
Speed to the pleasuring fleets!—
O for the green of the fields!

Down from his zenith-high lair
Blaze of the sun-lion beats.
Here one reels, one's swooning there—
Fever stalks mad through the streets.
O for a lake's silvern sheets
Skirted with groves! For deep wealds
Dowered with resinous sweets!
O for the green of the fields!

Here in the park off the square
Stretches a shadow that cheats
The faint to its sultrier snare.
Fever stalks mad through the streets.
O for a wood that repeats
Bird-songs and brook-songs and shields
Man from these merciless heats!
O for the green of the fields!

Scorching each soul that it meets,
Fever stalks mad through the streets.
Far from the power it wields,
O for the green of the fields!

BALLADE DES PAPILLONS

(*Irregular*)

Wealth is a sweet!
(How can it be?)
Glittering cheat,
False as the sea.
Hail! Poverty!
Wealth is a thrall!
And what are we?
Butterflies all.

Fame is a sweet!
(How can it be?)
Worth's dealt defeat,
Th' indign, victory.
False as the sea,
Fame is a thrall!
And what are we?
Butterflies all.

Love is a sweet!
(How can it be?)
Ah! fair Deceit,
Poison not me.
False as the sea,
Love is a thrall!
And what are we?
Butterflies all.

Life is a sweet
Tinctured with gall!
And what are we?
Butterflies all.

BALLADE OF MODERN LOVE

And still we play deep at the game of hearts,
As did they of the courts those old dim days.
Our Romeos bleed of the coy god's darts;
Our troubadours in amatory phrase
Disburden them: our knights, with eyes a-blaze,
Go armed with roses, comfits; this their vaunt:
“As ours, no swain has gone such loyal ways,
Since leal Leander swam the Hellespont!”

Dulcinea, she models toothsome tarts;
Rowena goes to shop in yellow chaise,
Who erstwhile queened the lists. Of warring arts
Poor ken has Helen; but o'er-well she plays
Sonata, fugue: Ruth paints as well as prays.
Staunch-true is each, each clouds as little daunt
As any Hero of the virelais,
Since leal Leander swam the Hellespont.

And here some power impishly disparts
Men's views of modern love, for one inveighs
Against *all* passion while his neighbor smarts
'Til he has lavished on it ardent praise:
And this year's love 's a jest, churl Tertius says.
Yet, in our Age, despite the jibe, the taunt,
We love as none have loved,—or men or fays,—
Since leal Leander swam the Hellespont.

Prince, whether Love is strengthened or decays,
My sweet and I are—and no more we want—
The happiest pair, whatever goes or stays,
Since leal Leander swam the Hellespont!

BALLADE OF THE TENTH MUSE

*“Be thou the Tenth Muse: ten times more in worth
Than those old Nine which rhymers invocate!”*
—Shakespeare, Sonnet XXXVIII.

Not in the Heav’n-girt house of Jupiter,
Him who begat the worship’t, tuneful Nine,
Is there an one that I, at point of spur
Or stretched on rack, would own as muse of mine,
Though in her charms she rivalled Proserpine,
In wisdom, Pallas. I refuse
Else than a dark-eyed mortal to enshrine,
And, sweetheart, *thou* wilt be my muse.

Young Erato, once I loved fondly her,—
She was inconstant as the April shine!
Urania, star-crowned, did nathless err
Who wed with Bacchus, reeking of his wine.
And Clio whispered me a tearful line,
Her gore-dipt quill would have me use:
Ah! brighter inspiration’s that of thine,
And—sweetheart, thou *wilt* be my muse?

Theirs be the palm, the laurels and the myrrh:
The lute, the flute and services condign.
Thou shalt have violets and lavender,
And hyssop sweet, and white-belled honey-bine
Those night-black, wilful tresses to confine:
A homage paid thee that renews
With each new day, nor fails at Youth’s decline;
And, sweetheart, thou *wilt* be my *muse*.

My love, thou art, as sweethearts are, divine;
Yet more the rhymer-swain pursues:
A Pow’r to invocate; a muse, in fine,
And, sweetheart, thou *wilt* be *my* muse!

BALLADE OF CHIVALRY

The mace, the gauntlet and the keen, bright lance,

Are only relics of the days that were;

And Rozinante in a mild way grants

That oats are sumptuous equinal fare.

Blithe Robin Hood has lost his whilom care
Of mesdames lorn and men in poor estate,

And fewer grow the knightly ones who dare
Young Raleigh's quick conceit to emulate.

To-day, in lieu of those old, true gallants,

Are modish swains through monocles that stare;
Whose best exploit is deftness in the dance.

To close a draughty door, to place a chair,

To lift a handkerchief, to bravely bear

Through stifling crush an ice upon a plate—

These are the pretty offices we share
Young Raleigh's quick conceit to emulate.

Who of these years can weave a wild romance

When knights are not, and squires serve otherwhere?
When most distracted maids are debutantes,

Each frowning battlement a rose parterre,

Moats tennis-courts, and castles all of air—

The only tourneys that we celebrate,

In drawing-rooms,—the lists where we repair
Young Raleigh's quick conceit to emulate.

Prince, read your ladye not from vellums rare

The thrilling tales our age that antedate

Lest she may mourn *we* have no time to spare

Young Raleigh's quick conceit to emulate.

A BALLADE OF MANY LOVES

The way of hearts is hilly
And hard to gauge methinks;
Cecilia loves a silly,
Cassandra loves a sphinx:
Wee Stella loves to play high jinks
With me—her doting daddy;
Selena loves the links,
And Kitty loves a caddy.

Pale Charlotte loves Chantilly,
(From creamy lace she shrinks,)
And when the weather's chilly
Amelia loves her minks.
Rebecca loves her bashful Binks,
Honora loves her Paddy,
Hélène loves skating rinks,
And Kitty loves a caddy.

Sweet Alice loves a lily,
Penelope loves pinks,
And Dinah, willy-nilly,
She loves her funny kinks.
The baby loves forbidden chinks,
Mamma her blue-eyed laddie,
Dear Granny forty winks,
And Kitty loves a caddy.

Kate's an old-fashioned minx,
Consistent—never faddy! —
She loves the tea she drinks,
And so she loves the caddy.

BALLADE FOR BEDTIME

Come, little girl, it's nearly eight
And time that you were tucked in bed!
Put up the book, the tale will wait
Until the hours of dark are sped.
The moon is young, and daylight's dead,
But from the grate the red-gold gleams
Of fire-light on the floor are shed—
Good-night, my child, and pleasant dreams!

A resting place have small and great—
A hutch for Bunny, stall for Ned,
A nest for Robin and his mate,
Puss has a cozy rug of red.
For Bossy fine, sweet straw is spread,
In silver beds lie sleepy streams,
This pillow's for a tired head—
Good night, my child, and pleasant dreams!

Love ably monitors our gate,
There's naught for you to fear or dread:
The Bogie-man is out of date,
And fairy-folk are all well-bred.
May your dear feet be ever led
By paths which catch the sun's best beams—
(Pray, Nurse, speak low and softly tread!)
Good night, my child, and pleasant dreams!

She sleeps, God bless her, and my thoughts are fled
To that dim time—*how dim it seems!*—
When my dear mother bent o'er me and said:
“*Good-night, my child, and pleasant dreams!*”

BALLADE OF FROCKS AND PINAFORES

Anon Jack slays his giants still,
And Misses Muffet from the shade
Of deft Arachne scamper will,
I doubt me not, while rhymes are made;
The stubborn Moll, with hoe and spade,
Fills her old *role* of botanist.
The goose still plays at alchemist;
The mouse, sad havoc in our clocks
As in—that craved no exorcist—
The days of pinafores and frocks.

The runners glisten on the hill
Sheened in the folds of Frost's brocade:
The coasters' voices, they are shrill
As when on hearth-rug deep I stayed
In ambush with my brave brigade,
And named each metal martialist.
O time of sweets none could resist,
And gingerbread in cupboard crocks!
Their skies were rose and amethyst,
The days of pinafores and frocks.

Sad years have come and gone, until
Meseems all mirth's a masquerade;
And all that's left of loves grown chill
Are scars brought from the sweet crusade.
Friends waxen dour as Moll, betrayed;
And giants, I have found, exist
That o'ertop Jack's. But who insist
Life's *all* a huge Pandoran box,
Those honeyed days have surely missed,—
The days of pinafores and frocks.

Fortuna, give me what ye list
Of Fame and all good things ye wist,
Ye can't restore my childhood locks
Nor bring me back the sunshine-kist,
The days of pinafores and frocks.

BALLADE OF ACADIE

Who sail o'er seas to worlds begrimed and old,
And worship at their altars of decay,
What hath so 'witched your eyes that you behold
Such charms, such beauty there? Nor imp nor fay
Could wean your footsteps or your sight away
From this sweet land, had you but slightly seen
Its gentle hills in cope of summer green,
Or trod its fields where peace and plenty be.

This is Rest's temple and Content's demesne,
This brooch upon the bosom of the sea.

Here, set in rim of rocks and sunlight gold,
A lavish nature makes her wide display
Of every scenic jewel tongue has told,
Or quill or pen has written of, or may
In far-off centuries anew portray.
Like silver ribbons, rivers run between
Their wooded banks, where never dole nor threne
Nor din of marts may mar the melody
Of birds. As they, to chant its praise I'm keen —
This brooch upon the bosom of the sea.

'Tis not the warrior alone that's bold,
Because his blood flows for his natal clay.
There are stout hearts, whose trials manifold
Find them increased in vigor day by day.
Theirs is the meed of all earth's cheers, I say.
Such hearts have made this land a shrine serene
Where happiness from highest height to sheen
Of ocean foam reigns with prosperity;
Not the least treasure of its gracious queen,
This brooch upon the bosom of the sea.

Prince, close your caskets. All the gems they screen
Despite their cost are lustreless and mean.
Come for a season and possess with me
Far from your court's mad tumult, spite and spleen,
This brooch upon the bosom of the sea.

BALLADE OF ANNISQUAM

I crave not Tempe's vale nor Enna's plain
With all their charm and sweet invitingness;
Nor do most restless seasons find me fain
On Hybla's fragrant ways my feet to press.

I know a spot still free of show's excess,
I know a purple bank where wild thyme grows;
I know a garden, in its pales that shows
Old-fashioned flow'rs in banks bestowed.

Dear Summer-land! And these your lover knows,
The high, white dunes, the willow road.

If to the blue *Æ*gean's shore the strain
Of Pan, his pipe, comes overhills, no less
The heartwrungr wail of Thetis in her pain
Uprises from the wave, big with distress.
But here, where far-outstretchéd to caress
A happy sea, the land a strong arm throws,
Is heard no anguished sighs, no echoed woes,
No sound that tears and sorrow bode.

No, only song and, where the salt breeze blows,
The high, white dunes, the willow road.

Out at the eastern point the wider main
Pays to the rocky shore its wild address.
The whistling buoy's o'er-dolorous refrain, [stress]
That warns 'gainst awful reefs, booms through the
Of wind and weather such as ne'er transgress
In peace-girt Annisquam. There is the prose, [goes,
Here, the sweet rhyme. There the black schooner
Here, flashing sails take up, unload
Light hearts that love beach, cove and blossomed close,
The high, white dunes, the willow road.

Prince, there are Parks and Piers, *you* may have those,
Where beauish garb obtains and beauties pose.

Give *me*, untaken of the *mode*,
At Annisquam my yacht, my garden rows,
The high, white dunes, the willow road.

BALLADE OF THE GOLDEN STATE

Cythera desolated over-seas

Lies, all her storied charms afar disspread
On torrid winds and reeking in the lees
Of Neptune's salt sea-wine: Her lovers dead
'Tombed in the jagged reef, their vows unsaid
For everness of eons. There is moan
In ev'ry surge that tumbles o'er her throne
Once set on hills that bathed in airs divine,
But better things than she e'er shewed are shown
On this thrice happy strand of song and shine.

The golden fruit of the Hesperides

From reach of mortal ken is faded, fled:
The blossoms that made drunken Hybla's bees
With surfeit sweet of sweets, long since are shed
Arcadian wines and ways are soured or sped;
But here are groves of gold bound in a zone
Of bloom as honey-sweet as Hybla's own!
The deep delights of Cypris' kingdoms nine
Are Sodom-apples by the pleasures known
On this thrice happy strand of song and shine.

My strong, young mariner, ship an ye please

To unsunned, blustrous bays where sails are shred;
Or summer, if ye list, in Arctic *bise*,
Or draw equatorward the journey's thread.
When grog is plenty and the mate's abed
No shrieking gales ye mind from east'ard blown,
But strength will fail and hours grow lorn and lone.
Then, make the last port on this shore of mine!
Here's Youth's Renaissance,—care forever flown,
On this thrice happy strand of song and shine.

Prince, leave the Orient's ashes and atone

For misspent years. The East is haughty grown!

We lack her tumult, tinsel, manners fine;
But Beauty speaks from peak, from tree, from stone,
On this thrice happy strand of song and shine.

BALLADE OF FALILA AND WESTERN DAYS

(*Ballade en guise de Rondeau*)

Falila, sweet-eyed, of far-distant plain,
Paw-paw and May-apple ripe where she strays.
Drear nevermore are the hours of the rain
While bright smile-sunshine upon her lips plays.
When my life led me in uncheerful ways,
She stanch'd the torrent of trouble and pain,—
Chieftest of joys in the dear western days,
Falila!

Falila, bright-eyed, O long is the train
Ready with voices to sound in her praise!
Such is her music, that birds of the lane
Shrink from the echoing of their own lays.
I hear the words of her modest denays:
Coy, unassuming, unboasting, unvain,
Thus were you e'er in the glad western days,
Falila!

Falila, dark-eyed, the fathomless main
Is not so deep as her heart: and the rays
Of the noon sun have a something to gain
'Ere they can cope with her winsomeness. Stays
Each favored one at her court, and obeys
Her sweet behests with no thought to complain:
Just as I did in the dead western days,
Falila!

Prince, does my poorly-writ verses contain
That which the worshipping lover betrays?
Ah! my heart's bound with a light, golden chain
Since I knew *her* in the dear western days,—
Falila.

BALLADE OF THE AVENUE

Feathers and flowers and lace,
 Velvet of wonderful pile;
Worn with as wonderful grace
 Furs from far sea and defile:
 Gems from lands south of the Nile,
Broadcloth and silk and brocade—
 This is the march past of Style,
This is the Easter Parade.

Fashion's the god of the race
 Crowding this marvellous mile.
Here is a quieter place,
 Pray let us stand for awhile.
 Where, save on Gotham's gay isle,
Is such display of wealth made?
 This is the march past of Style,
This is the Easter Parade.

There is a beautiful face:—
 In all this festival file
Not a thing's sordid or base,
 Yet not one truly worth while!
 Grandeur and gossip and guile,
Trinkets and frills that must fade—
 This is the march past of Style,
This is the Easter Parade.

Cupid, how bravely you smile,
 But you're *de trop* I'm afraid!
Here are no hearts you may wile—
 This is the Easter Parade.

BALLADE OF MARCH WINDS

In embryo riding each gust
Of March is a hundred diseases.
Willy-nilly you're out for the dust;
The Public at large coughs and sneezes,
Your neighbor's asthmatic—he wheezes—
Go South? How he wishes he *could!*
But the doctor collecting fat fees is—
It's an ill wind blows nobody good!

A corner! (Well! laugh if you must.)
My Derby's the sport of the breezes
'Till rescued by one (I mistrust)
Who a stranger to four-o'clock-teas is.
Sore his need of a biscuit and cheese is—
That look can't be misunderstood—
And I think, as his guerdon he seizes,
It's an ill wind blows nobody good!

The poet is sadly nonplussed,
No flower on his favorite leas is:
His Muse, never very robust,
Collapses when March 'round her knees is.
He longs for new leaves on the treeses,*
He longs for new wings in the wood;
He can't sing of spring while he freezes!
(It's an ill wind blows nobody good!)

Adele's on my arm (which she squeezes)
Charmant in her Saxony hood.
She may snuggle as close as she pleases—
It's an ill wind blows nobody good!

* *By Special License.*

BALLADE OF THE BORROWER MONTH

That month whose signet is The Ram
Rules madly as an early Czar:
Between the Lion and the Lamb
She crushes all beneath her car.
Her stinging knouts leave many a scar
That burn and throb with fever heat;
We're only serfs spurned by her feet
Through dark, interminable days;
But though she blind me with her sleet,
I love March for her mad, wild ways.

A child of summer though I am,
And prize the honey in her jar,
Some cantrip in their bitter dram
Endears these winds that rend and mar.
Bare branches, or a jasmine star
That makes the whole world soft and sweet?
To struggle up a stormy street,
Or drift unhatted down blue bays?
Your choice is mine—but, I repeat,
I love March for her mad, wild ways.

When Leo's roar becomes a sham,
The Lamb still bleating from afar,
March hoists a crocus oriflamme
And shows how lovely tulips are.
Then, sheathing every scimitar
Wherewith she pierced us, makes retreat
In borrowed braveries—O cheat!—
Young April's tears, a smile of May's.
Yet pardoning this last deceit
I love March for her mad, wild ways.

Dear Alison, the song's complete
And all for you—for you, my sweet,
Are like the month it seeks to praise.
Ah! but remember, I entreat,
I love March for her mad, wild ways.

BALLADE OF APRIL WEATHER

Now March has sheathed her knives, and sheened her lead
Of sea and sky in gold of richest vein;
And leagues of smiling wold are overspread

With new, enchanting green. The scars, the stain
Of wintry havoc on broad fields; the bane
Of Arctic-bitter days, their blinding sleet,—
The mem'ry of 't,—these do evanish fleet;
For Winter totters from his tott'ring throne,
And, back from highway rut and paven street,
Deep in dim woods anemones are blown.

Of thaw the slow drip, drip, from eaves o'erhead
Tells softly, dashing from the sill to pane,
Soon will be large, blue violets, instead
Of high, white drifts that by the ways have lain.
Foreshows approach of Zephyr glist'ning vane,
He of the fragrant breath and train replete
With honeyed days. The flying, homeward feet
Are slower grown since winds no more make moan;
And, Earth again doffed of her winding-sheet,
Deep in dim woods anemones are blown.

The show'rs, wrought warp and weft of silver thread,
In frequent falls they drench the willing plain
Until, where swollen brook and river wed,
Seems Thessaly beneath Deucalion's reign
In miniature. Though tears flow now amain
Will follow smiles, and eftsoons we shall meet
For morning chats upon the garden-seat.
Of cynics scorned, of city-bound unknown,
Awakened by the warm rain's gentle beat,
Deep in dim woods anemones are blown.

Love, to wear hot-house roses is unmeet
When April weather comes back to its own:
For see! besides the roses, times more sweet,
It to your cheek restores, in our retreat
Deep in dim woods, anemones are blown.

BALLADE OF SHROVETIDE

(*Pancake Tuesday*)

The day of cakes and no brisk cook
To charm us by her sorcery—
By magic learned from no black book,
An all-unwritten recipe!
A plague take recreant cooks, say we!
Who'll minister to our distress?
A volunteer! Lo! it is *she*—
Perilla, in *cuisine undress*!

The batter's ready. Give a look!
What's this, pray, if not alchemy?
It gurgles like a happy brook
From cup to griddle, steadily.
And now she turns them—*one! two! three!*
Brown-golden spheres of toothsomeness,
(Her cheeks might well befool a bee!)
Perilla in *cuisine undress*.

And now—hot plates! while from its nook
The nectar of the maple tree
Is brought, and taken from its hook
The firkin pays a splendid fee.
Add what you will—a pot of tea,
A juicy rasher,—I confess
The *picture's* feast enough for *me*—
Perilla in *cuisine undress*.

Come Lent with your long litany,
I shall not chafe at your duress,
For every sombre hour I'll see
Perilla in *cuisine undress*.

BALLADE OF A SUMMER NIGHT

*“Sing lullaby, as women do
Wherewith they bring their babes to rest.”*
—George Gascoigne (1537-1577.)

To end is drawn
The long, hot day;
The light is gone
And Night's cool gray
Cloaks hill and bay.

“Let worries go
Till morning's ray,
Hush sweet, by-low.”

Up midnight's lawn
Black shadows stray;
The long streets yawn
As dark as they.
“Why wakeful stay
Eyes, glist'ning so?
Forget your play!
Hush sweet, by-low.”

And on and on
Night goes its way
Towards rosy dawn
That shall betray
The soon-grown sway
Of Fever, foe
That brings dismay.
“Hush sweet, by-low.”

Pray mother, pray,
The heart beats slow;
Nor cease to say
“Hush sweet, by-low.”

BALLADE OF BLUE SEAS

Grant me a small boat's captaincy
Whose twenty virgin feet
Still dance beside her builder's quay,
 The snow upon her sheet:
And though the world ashore is sweet
 Inside *one* garden pale,
With glad dispatch I'll join your fleet
 Blue summer seas to sail.

How much misled 's the zealot he
 That pedals through the heat
An hundred long, parched miles to be
 In at a dusty meet,
When there below the thirsty street,
 Rocked in the strong, salt gale,
The yachts invite us—nay! entreat—
 Blue summer seas to sail.

The purple-black of woods to me
 Is but a sombre cheat;
The arbor's fading canopy
 A leafy, poor deceit:
The gentle lap and rhythmic beat
 Of waves—*these* drown all bale!
It's joy that can't grow obsolete,
 Blue summer seas to sail.

But Flora dear, *no* Joy's complete
 Without *you!* Fly your gaol—
This cushioned, drowsy window-seat—
 Blue summer seas to sail.

BALLADE OF A CITY BOWER

Of bosky dells with brown and silver brooks
Pipes numberless perennially shrill,
For publishment betimes in sightly books,
Songs breathing righteous praise of bough and rill.
These are fair spots, but here God's gracious will,
A stone's throw from the city's heart and din,
Gives me as fair—let me deserve it still!—
My upper window where the elm looks in.

They love dark things who celebrate the rooks
That build in woody places mirk and chill:
My neighbor, too, misled, on sturdy hooks
A painted cage hangs from his window-sill
And hears not in its captive's ev'ry trill
Pleas for the liberty he may not win.
Those are free, lusty throats with tune that fill
My upper window where the elm looks in.

A glist'ring, turquoise bay it overlooks,
My pleasant bower, and a gentle hill
Gilt with wild mustard blossoms. There are nooks
Beyond them, doubtless, which a little skill
In ballad-making must misprize. To thrill
The world with perfect lays let them begin
Who can. This theme befits an humbler quill—
My upper window where the elm looks in.

When day is over at the rumbling mill
And slipped the gyves of office discipline,
Here is an exorcist for ev'ry ill—
My upper window where the elm looks in.

BALLADE OF THE SUMMER PARK

Here by the gate the elms are tall
And deep the shadow rugs that lie
Beneath my feet. No statued hall,
No Obelisk can satisfy;
Nor fulsome Zoo allure me nigh
The cages of its shaggy freaks,
Whilst still by here elects to fly
The cyclodonna in her breeks.

It takes no effort to recall
The days before the Park was spry
With wheels, and staid, slow rigs were all
One saw. 'Tis true you *might* descry
Upon the bridle-paths one shy,
Fair rider in a dozen weeks,
But nothing ever to outvie
The cyclodonna in her breeks.

I know there's music on the Mall,
And further out that Lake and sky
Seen from the Terrace hold in thrall
Full many a dim but ravished eye.
Yet here I stay to see flash by
That nymph with health writ on her cheeks,
Whom no prude shall to *me* decry,
The cyclodonna in her breeks.

Coquette, afoot or stationed high
Upon a cart that jolts and creaks,
We don't see *you*, we only spy
The cyclodonna in her breeks!

BALLADE OF THE YACHT

Sweet Eos dons her blossom-broidered gown
Whose rath, green bodice with the dew is dight;
The clang and clash of brazen bells the town,
Awake from drowse and dream to love and light.
His vigil ends the owl on lonely height;
The soon-ris'n Nimrod pipes the am'rous quail:
The imprisoned bird sings in his gilded gaol;
Trade's cumbrous wheels begin another day:
The sun-imps dance upon its reefless sail,
And with the wind the yacht goes down the bay.

At zenith-height is Phœbus: in her crown,
The Day sees sheep and shepherd stretched outright
Deep in their quiet nooning on the down,
And dappled kine, breast-high in waters white.
The wanton, purple passion-flow'rs invite
Each passing bee across the trellised pale;
With cloth spread in the bosky intervalle
The brookside angler lunches, cares away:
The booming waves intone a Stentor wail,
And with the wind the yacht goes down the bay.

Still at the wheel remains the boatswain brown,
When golden stars peep through the roof of Night;
In murky shade the distant headlands frown,
And raven rooks shriek on their homeward flight:
Abroad is Cynthia, unveiled and bright,
With silvern *douceurs* for the hill and swale:
The tavern host commends the evening ale,
And slattern wives go gossiping. The spray
Of sea-salt waves flies in the gentle gale,
And with the wind the yacht goes down the bay.

Prince, close your book upon the idle tale:
Romance is cheap, and Fantasy is frail.
At Dian's court there homage is to pay,—
Come, she attends upon its glist'ring trail;
And with the wind the yacht goes down the bay.

BALLADE OF OCTOBER DUSK

Orange-scarlet afterglow
Where was fiercest gold before;
Rose and purple isles a-row,
Higher than the swallows soar;
Plaything bolts of loud-voiced Thor.
What if day goes goldenly
And the garden still may be
Redolent of mint and musk
When my love is leaving me
In the chill October dusk?

Southern skies a bright brooch show
Such as lady never wore;
New pale moon that may know
As she enters at the door
We go out hearts sad and sore
Smiling through our misery—
O the tearful comedy!
Like a boar with cruel tusk
Parting wounds and then goes free,
In the chill October dusk.

There upon the bay below
Red lights, green lights, many-score
Gleam; black hulks great shadows throw
That will haunt me evermore.
“All aboard!” and “All ashore!”
Cried in drear monotony;
Up creak gang-planks strong, and we
Shout farewell with voices husk,
As the ship moves from the quay
In the chill October dusk.

Prince, I mourn; you sup in glee.
Liege, I fast; your fragrant tea
Tempts me not, nor flaky rusk;
For my Love sails to the sea
In the chill October dusk.

BALLADE OF THANKSGIVING

Of all the blessings men receive
 Health is the chiefest it is said:
How well, surcease or sweet reprieve
 From pain has shown whoe'er some dread
 And lingering ill has chained abed
Through periods of dire duress;
 But, granting this boon's place the head,
Let's first give thanks for thankfulness.

Pure love requited! Ah! believe
 Him that flouts this, knave or misled.
Let not his obloquies aggrieve,
 Smile down his sophistries instead.
We on whom Hymen's torch has shed
 Its light know how dear eyes can bless
 A hearth,—but wedded or unwed,
Let's first give thanks for thankfulness.

A shuttle's Wealth from which we weave
 In Life's cloth many a golden thread;
And when its seas of sorrow heave,
 A curse from which the oil is lead.
Wealth has supplied this bounteous spread
For which we wait thanks to express,
 But friends, before we break our bread,
Let's first give thanks for thankfulness.

Whose sense of gratitude is dead,
 He lacks that gift which to possess
Gives joy when other gifts are sped:
 Then first give thanks for thankfulness.

BALLADE OF THE MISTLETOE BOUGH

I sing, like Omar, of a bough
'Neath which delights await us:
It rains, as long it rained erenow,
Sweets that intoxicate us;
Sweets that would never sate us
And as the archives show,
Sweets that may haply mate us.
Sing hey! the Mistletoe.

The pine torn from a mountain's brow,
Its odors penetrate us
And lead our feet from failure's slough
To heights that fascinate us.
In hues that stimulate us
The holly-berries glow,
But though both captivate us,
Sing hey! the Mistletoe.

Whilst still these brisk north winds endow
The bard with rare afflatus,
We'll winter here nor grudge, we vow,
His cap to Fortunatus.
The chimes which now elate us
Proclaim that through the snow
Yule's come to recreate us—
Sing hey! the Mistletoe.

Some love us and some hate us:
Good-will to friend and foe!
And till the saints translate us,
Sing hey! the Mistletoe.

BALLADE OF THE WHITE YEAR

One crimson afghan serving both, we sat
Heart-sick through yester-twilight grey and brief
And watched her fleetly press from marish flat
To fields where lately shone the aureate sheaf,
Garbed like a nun, soft-footed as a thief.
To-night she fills the streets with her cold glare,
Shrieks down long paths that summer's darlings were
And at my door. But nay! To valleys wide
Or stark, dark hills for cloister must she fare,
Not in these walls shall any pale thing bide.

Where just erenow she had her habitat,
Or I misdeem, no voice is choked with grief
For her leave-taking. As for joy hereat,
There is not any. Plainly, we'd as lief
See August hold the land in thirsty tief'
Eternally, as this mad phantom tear
The pleasant cress from wimpling brooks and stare
Recurrently at us Ophelia-eyed.
To cross our threshold,—*that* she'll never dare!
Not in these walls shall any pale thing bide.

The bake-house shops lure each a shiv'ring brat,
Their flaring lamps disclosing reef on reef
Of shifting, drifting fleece. This road or that
A warring host might take with its good chief
And wake no louder echo than a leaf
That falls on grass.

Indoors let us prepare

A carnival of yellow lights and swear
O'er steaming toddy, by the flow'rs that died,
Until the dread one comes who none will spare
Not in these walls shall any pale thing bide.

Love, take the white carnation from your hair;
Throne in its stead this glowing red one there.
Have fresh coals brought; the fire screen set aside
Whose gilt, mock roses breathe no June-time air.
Not in these walls shall *any* pale thing bide!

BALLADE AGAINST THE UTOPIAN SCREED

Who bashless revileth his age,
Decrying its sons to a man,
He soureth and soileth his page
As no hack's indecency can.
If he in our favor would grow
And finds in our pleasure a meed,
'Twere folly, or much I mistrow,
To write a Utopian screed.

And whoso essays to engage
With dry psychological bran
The reader: who toils for his wage
On verses that never will scan,
Of themes to verse *mal a propos*,
Leaves heritage none to his seed
Of Fame. And 'twere vainer, sweet foe,
To write a Utopian screed.

The pessimist is not a sage
To put the World under a ban:
Heroics are shallows of rage—
To rant is a horrible plan!—
The rhapsodist, yet doth he so!
A fig for their air-castle creed,
Who all their best talents bestow
To write a Utopian screed!

My Prince, to all lengths do they go,
And sates with fool's gold each his greed,
Who Reason and Right overthrow
To write a Utopian screed.

BALLADE OF THE REVIEWER

I've read critiques for many years
All in an easy-going way;
The serious, that move to tears,
The truly heartening and gay.
And I have marvelled (as you may)
That volumes come from every source
Which bring this estimate in play:
“His latest book's a *tour de force!*”

If faint praise damns, as it appears,
To what does overpraise betray?
'Twould seem that the reviewer fears
Against bad writing to inveigh.
One recently—to my dismay—
A ‘maiden effort’ to endorse,
Wrote: “Here's an author come to stay,
His latest book's a *tour de force!*”

A tale of travel in Algiers
As prosy as the badger's gray;
A ‘verse collection’ hinting shears,
A ‘sea romance’ as dry as hay!
Of politics a warped survey,
A “Dissertation on Divorce”—
I read of each in this array:
“His latest book's a *tour de force!*”

Golf weather: Copy due to-day;
None ready—but he plays, of course!
Knowing 'twill be quite safe to say:
“His latest book's a *tour de force!*”

BALLADE OF CURRENT FICTION

In the *Gulliver* days of my youth,
(O the *Baron* was dear to me, too!)
I heard people pair fiction and truth
In a figure familiar to you.
The deduction was sound, that I knew,
But I say, fearing no contradiction,
With a current romance in review,
Truth no longer is stranger than fiction!

Time was when I'd given a tooth
For a tale of the West — of the Sioux
Or Apache — that thrilled in good sooth
As no fine fancy could, through and through.
Ah! but taste that much favored ragout—
The “Historical Novel”. Its diction
And chronology prove, both askew,
Truth no longer is stranger than fiction.

Monte Cristo wrote Dumas, *sans* ruth
For them that excitement eschew;
M. Verne piled up book-shelf and booth
With deep mysteries none could unclue.
But 'twas not till the still growing crew
Of biographers brought down affliction
That, sighing, we fostered the view:
Truth no longer is stranger than fiction.

As I read the new books (for I do)
Strong and stronger becomes my conviction
Despite what may once have been true,
Truth *no longer* is stranger than fiction.

BALLADE OF THE CONTEMPORANEOUS DRAMA

Though badly involved be the plot,
The action deplorably slow,
The sentiment imbecile rot,
Your Public will crowd to the 'show'
And make it the veriest 'go'
If the star exploits gowns and a hat
Designed by some Frenchman & Co.
The Costume Play's where we are at!

A man may O'Connor * a lot
Through a piece whose sanguineous flow
In Bowery parlance is 'hot'
And shock the least captious, but so
He wears plumes in his jaunty *chapeau*,
A sword at his side and all that,
His row is dead easy to hoe.
The Costume Play's where we are at !

The Play with a Purpose is not
The power it was, and I trow
We've each mother's son clean forgot
The Problems discussed con and pro.
(Mostly con !) We're at present aglow
With frippery worship. (It's flat
The playwrights are out for the 'dough'—
The Costume Play's what *they* are at!)

L'ENVOI

(Addressed to conscientious but unsuccessful aspirants for dramatic honors.)

It's needless to have, you should know,
Your lines down so terribly pat:
More care on your *dressing* bestow !—
The *Costume Play*'s where we are at !

*Reference is made here to the methods of James Owen O'Conor, one of New York's most noted (!) Thespians.

BALLADE OF HER BONBONNIERE

Now Cupid *said* he pitied my lone state,
(Its *freedom* envied he, else I mistrow!)
And bade a maiden come to my heart's gate
Pull at its latch-string hard, nor quarter show.
And there she stands, deep in disfavor's snow!
Her brindled locks of sometime bleaching hints,
And that I could forgive the girl; but O
Her *bonbonniere* is filled with peppermints!

I'm not o'er-eager for a priest-bound mate [blow,
While twenties' winds from Pleasure's play-ground
And when I wed no Quakerish-sedate,
Be-wimpled prude shall mix *my* biscuit-dough!
This Cupid's-choice wears figured frocks that throw
In shade for loudness old-year bed-quilt chintz—
And that I could forgive the girl; but woe!
Her *bonbonniere* is filled with peppermints!

Imagine sitting at a play with Kate.
(That is her name.) You hear a smothered "pho!"
Mouchoir to face your neighbor sits, distract,
While Kitty munches on and doesn't know.
I might forget in time—a year or so—
The sad illusion of her cheeks' false tints:
This is the straw that bends the camel low:
Her *bonbonniere* is filled with peppermints!

Dan Cupid, bundle up your darts and go!
And prithee take the damsel with you, since
I cannot love her if I will or no—
Her *bonbonniere* is filled with peppermints!

BALLADE OF BUSINESS LETTERS

Dear Sir (or Sirs):—they're started so—
Your valued favor of— (the date)—
Has come to hand. We give below
Our prices, and beg leave to state
Upon the terms you indicate
Your order will (no ifs or ands!)
Receive attention adequate.
Awaiting your esteemed commands,—

Dear Sir:— (or Sirs, if there's a Co.)—
To-day we're very pleased to slate
Your kind commission. Goods will go
A month hence by the fastest freight.
We trust you will not hesitate
To order in our other brands—
Each one is better than its mate!
Awaiting your esteemed commands,—

Dear Sir (or Sirs): Please let us know
How long we must anticipate
The payment of account you owe,
Now long past due. While we should hate
(Collection to accelerate)
The matter in our lawyers' hands
To place—we cannot longer wait!
Awaiting your esteemed commands,—

Prince, ballads' burdens celebrate
Themes sunless as the Ocean's sands:
Trade, one refrain sings early, late,—
“Awaiting your esteemed command .”

BALLADE OF AGE AND YOUTH

I'm forty past. There is a tinge of gray
Upon my beard that tonics can't displace;
And as I shaved to—yes, it was to-day,
 The mirror hinted to my very face
 That I am aging; eke that it could trace
Crowfeet at either eye; I should be told!
 But while this heart of mine keeps its young pace
“My glass shall not persuade me I am old!”

I'm portly grown; but not too stout to play
 An inning now and then; can bag a brace
Of any feathered things that come my way;
 Or take a five-bar gate upon the chase.
For me there's still excitement in a race;
Nor have I yet begun to count my gold—
 Until I cannot tell the deuce from ace,
“My glass shall not persuade me I am old!”

I'm grown a trifle stiff—a stick, some say—
 (My gaiters *have* grown harder to unlace !)
But manage still to mount and ride away
 In saddle or a-wheel with old-time grace.
And I can pirouette if I've the space,
Or waltz till Bud's mama is prone to scold;
 Can flirt a very—well, in any case,
“My glass shall not persuade me I am old!”

She owns to twenty-three, Ah, fickle, base!
Who jilted me, as many years grown cold.
Time, while you sour her with no wry grimace,
“My glass shall not persuade me I am old!”

BALLADE OF SNOBS

(*Irregular*)

He brings his garb over the ocean
That some Cockney hack has created;
And cherishes, somehow, a notion
Broadway should not be cultivated.
The while Cousin Snip, much elated,
Ships his tweeds as ill-cut as you please,—
Ah! how would its dainties be rated
If Dresden were not overseas?

Madame, her soap, salts, perfume, lotion,
Gowns, lingerie, hats overweighted;
The missal that's half her devotion,
(By some frowsy Celt consecrated,)—
The head of her house, dissipated,
She must needs go abroad for all these!
Ah! how would its dainties be rated
If Dresden were not overseas?

Your girl, Sir, will sip no love-potion
Of home-make, and yonder's mis-mated.
My boy shows a deal of emotion
If here he must be educated.
And we, you and I, have debated
Our Land's right to any degrees,—
Ah! how would its dainties be rated
If Dresden were not overseas?

Europa, your trap is well-baited:
We swallow both hook and the cheese!
Ah! how would its dainties be rated
If Dresden were not overseas?

BALLADE OF A MODERN WITCH

(*Irregular*)

I'll warrant you Kate is a witch,
For when she so much as displays
A dimple I've straightway a stitch
Somewhere near my heart that dismayes,
And pains that no ointment allays,
Nor lotion, nor liniment nips—
It's well she's too late for the gaze
Of Endicott, Bradstreet and Phips!

I'll warrant you Kate is a witch
Though 'gainst all weird things she inveighs.
My hopes to their uttermost pitch
Her eyes, if she wills it, can raise:
Or dash them, if so she essays,
To depths of eternal eclipse
As Stygian dark as the ways
Of Endicott, Bradstreet and Phips.

I'll warrant you Kate is a witch
In spite of her positive nays.
And still with each twinge and each twitch
Her craft takes a pleasanter phase.
Whatever in me this betrays,
In truth of romance it quite strips
The most undesirable bays
Of Endicott, Bradstreet and Phips.

Prince, if in the old Salem days
As Kate's, there were pleas from such lips,
I can't say enough in dispraise
Of Endicott, Bradstreet and Phips!

BALLADE PENSOROSO

Oh! dreary twelvemonth that has crept
With laggard steps the seasons through,
Thy cruel clouds have coldly kept
Their sweeter side close from my view.
Within thy skies no tender blue,
No dancing sunlight on the bay,—
As when thou dawnded, my grief is new,
My Love is dead a year to-day.

With no dear joy my heart has leapt
As in old time 'twas wont to do:
No flow'rs on May's young bosom slept
With redolence and charm of hue;
And June was garlanded in rue.
Mid-August's brightest days were gray,
And with each hour my sorrow grew.
My Love is dead a year to-day.

Then autumn's dreadful tempests swept
Across her grave, where sombre yew
And writhing willow groaned and wept
In trist accord with me. Less true
Hadst *thou* been, bleeding heart, say who
Would merrier be than I? Yet, nay!
Beat loyal on, true hearts are few!
My Love is dead a year to-day.

Friend, naught with brightness can endue
Th' incessant winter of my way:
Nor light I seek, nor mirth pursue,—
My Love is dead a year to-day.

BALLADE OF THE SNOWDROP

"Out of the snow, the snowdrop—out of death comes life."

After everness of days
White with fleece from countless bales
Piled breast-high along the ways
Shroud-like,—when the wind bewails
Earth's dead glory,—loud *All Hails*
Greet not least of God's dear gifts,
This, whose promise never fails,
Pale, sweet snowdrop 'tween the drifts.

Bloom-deep boughs and budding sprays;
Quick release of snow-bound swales;
Glad, new notes of woodland praise,
Green-clad groves and gentle gales:
Summer light on silver sails,—
These it promises and shifts
From the heart all wintry ails,
Pale, sweet snowdrop 'tween the drifts.

Harbinger of earthly Mays;
Symbol of celestial vales,
And the life One's blest hands raise
From the dark of Death's chill gaols:
Spirit in the gloom that quails
Reach your lute and close its rifts,
Here is come that Hope entails,—
Pale, sweet snowdrop 'tween the drifts.

Dear my sister, graveyard pales
Lose their awe when winter lifts
And the new life's sign unveils,—
Pale, sweet snowdrop 'tween the drifts.

BALLADE OF THE EVERGREEN AND TRUE FRIENDSHIP

Now to the rigors of this aguish plain
Who will address a verse of worshipment?
Whose winds are Mistral-wild, and whose slant rain
Is keen and cold as summer show'rs are gent:
Whose brook, a wanton and incontinent,
Intrigues with Fresco, though late did she shine
With Sunbeam's warmest kiss. Who do incline
To sing this widowed heath, shent of all sheen?
None? None will do this? Then the joy be mine—
There is our Friendship's type, the evergreen.

It was but yesternight, inconstant swain,
That you the frail, blue myosotis sent
Enfolded with a gushing quatorzain
Unto your newest dear, yet is it spent,
And you the ardor of your runes repent,
Though when you wrote, fret did you and repine
Because you could not promise in each line
Eternal truth. And this was but yestreen!
Fit emblem of your faith, this faded sign!
There is our Friendship's type,—the evergreen.

Knights of idlesse who dominate Cockaigne,
And who indenizen the vast extent
Yclept Bohemia, you do profane
The holy name of Friendship that invent
A chance to call it where you most frequent:
You, whose best joy is all cocottes and wine,
Pledge sweet good-fellowship in bitter Rhine,
Then in an hour you curse the cup and quean!
What symbol has *this* fellowship divine?
There is our Friendship's type,—the evergreen.

Time, crave we this, who owed you much lang syne:
To ever kneel before a spotless shrine
To honor consecrate and candor clean.
That we may tell it of the constant pine—
There is our Friendship's type, the evergreen!

BALLADE OF THE SONG AND THE PLAINT

Where comes Orsino of a tristful mien,

Cheeks wan with languishment and fingers cold,

To voice his love anew in dole and threne,—

Mark you, where comes Orsino unconsoled,

None stay to hear his bitter grievance told;

But flee in haste his rueful presence, lest

His low lament disquiet ev'ry breast.

Unwisest swain is he who woos his saint

With threnodies full of his heart's unrest:

Who loves the song whose burden is a plaint?

Mark you the sweet young year whose skirts of green

Are stitched with harebell blue and crowfoot gold:

Is there a churl who can so much misween

As think her fairer when she has grown old

And all her rivers sigh? When winds o'er-bold

The good trees ravish, desecrate the nest

Of shiv'ring birds and sough their sorriest?

Give me of Maying measures, dulcet-faint,

These of all twelvemonth melodies are best:

Who loves the song whose burden is a plaint?

Wherefore, my poet, is thy pen so keen

To write of tragedies? And ye who hold

Euterpe first of all the Nine, ye glean

What good, what pleasure of the dirge ye scrolled?

Men love not tears, nor knells for being tolled!

Go emulate the thrush who have transgressed

And given monody for mirth! A pest

Be to the knave whose grief knows no restraint!

Sing us a ditty that is full of jest:

Who loves the song whose burden is a plaint?

Prince, 'tis as you have said, we all attest.

The minstrel should not leave us sore distressed:

The world with woe is all too well acquaint!

He surely of a de'il is possessed

Who loves the song whose burden is a plaint.

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